

EXCLUSIVE! PLAYABLE XBOX DVD



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN **XBOX MAGAZINE**

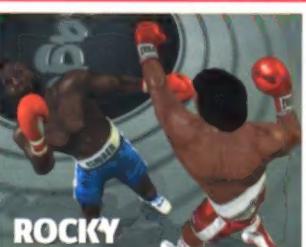
EVERY XBOX GAME
REVIEWED INSIDE!

6 EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS

- HALO
- RALLISPORT CHALLENGE
- MOTO GP
- CRASH
- F1 2002
- DEADLY SKIES

LATEST GOSSIP
JAPANESE SALES, XBOX LIVE,
64-PLAYER TENNIS & MORE!

THE HOTTEST GAMES FIRST!



PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/06048



DERWENT HOWARD



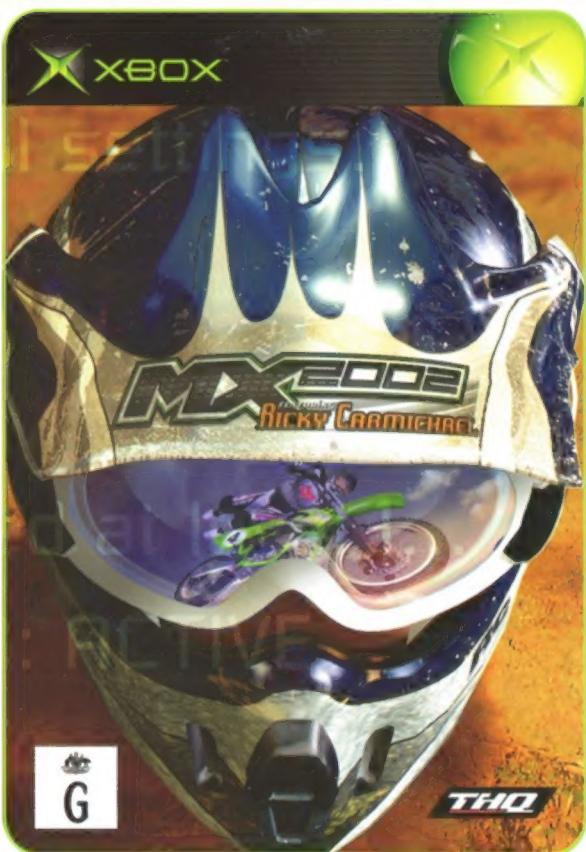
system diagnostic
ing maximised poten

Acting at 100%
Speed 100%

MX2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Featuring jaw-dropping graphics, awe-inspiring speed, a perfect blend of traditional racing and free ride madness, plus 28 pro riders including the sport's new grand champion, MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael isn't just a game - it's a complete motocross experience.

Features: An exhaustive list of freestyle tricks including signature moves including Carey Hart's "Hart Attack" and Tommy Clowers' "Catwalk" • 6 different multi-player modes including Stunt Showdown, Challenge Race and Target Jumping.



G

THQ

unlock your Xbox's



XBOX



Ultimate Racing Technology

G
GENERAL

MOTO GP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY

MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology is an ultra-realistic bike racer for the Xbox, which puts you, the player, behind the handle-bars of some of the meanest, fastest, most thrilling machines on two-wheels.

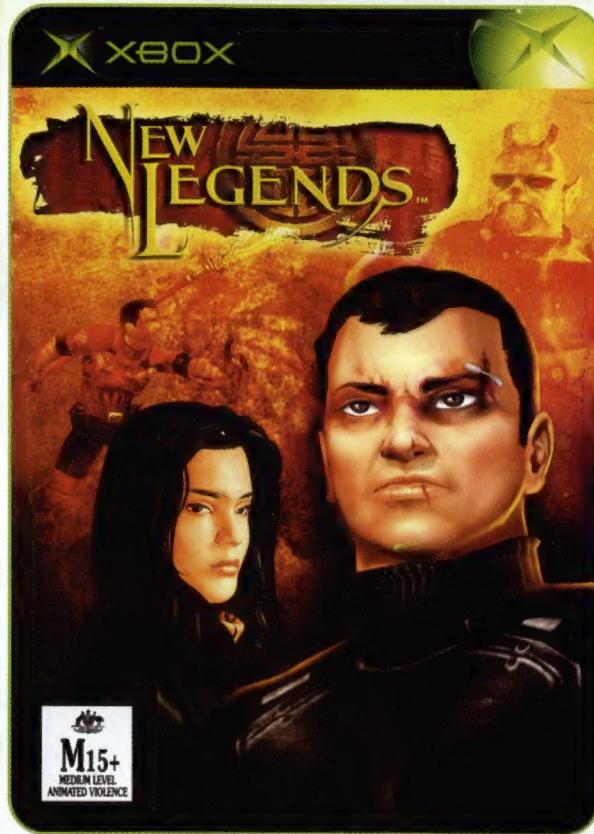
With a variety of innovative gameplay elements, supported by revolutionary graphical and technical features, MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology brings the perfect gaming mix of speed, style, bravery and technology to your Xbox.

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NEW LEGENDS

It is a time for chaos, a time for defiance... a time for heroes. New Legends is a 3rd person action game setting man against militia. In a world of tomorrow, where both technology and tradition blend to create a rich, and threatening world.

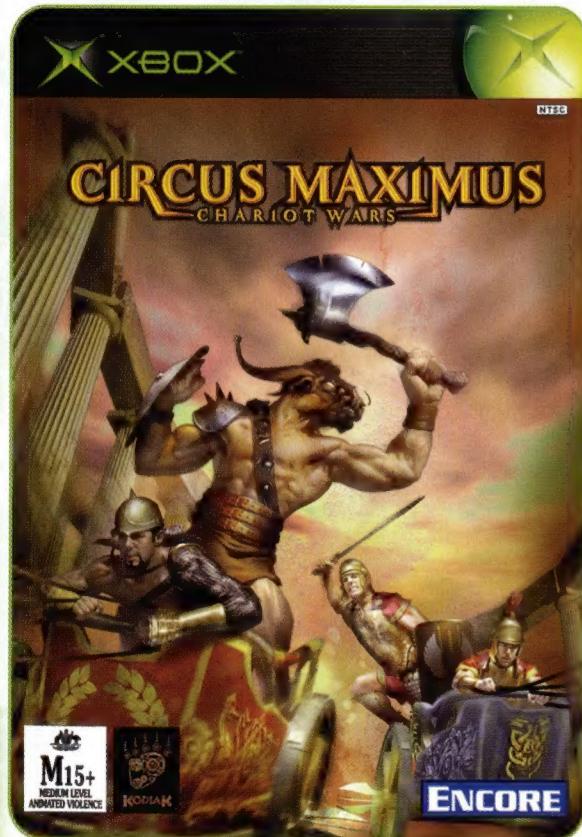
How long will you take to master the melee weapons and the dazzling martial arts attacks so you can save the civilisation from the impending doom...?



M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

potential power

CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS



M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

KODAK

ENCORE

As the first and only game to combine the classic themes of chariot racing and gladiator fighting, Circus Maximus: Chariot Wars brings the raw excitement of survival racing to the majestic coliseums and arenas of the Roman Empire.

Features: Up to 4 players set up 2-man teams for unparalleled co-op racing and fighting action • 22 unique characters with individual features • 7 beautiful Roman landscapes with 19 tracks • Multiple race modes (Arcade, Multiplayer, Tournament & Training)

THQ

M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

OFFICIAL

► THE BEST XBOX NEWS AND REVIEWS

PLAYABLE

► THE EXCLUSIVE SOURCE FOR PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS

FIRST

► NEWS, PREVIEWS & REVIEWS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

► THE OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine is written by a group of experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment there is. This magazine will reflect that at all times.

► WE BELIEVE THAT the arrival of Xbox represents one of the most important developments in video games. Xbox will not 'kill' the PS2 or GameCube - and as gamers we wouldn't want it to. However, the power and technological innovation offered by Microsoft's new machine will result in better games and more choice for Xbox owners.

► BEING THE OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine means that we are in the best position to give impartial, honest review scores. We don't do any deals to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best possible position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

► MICROSOFT HAS no access to, or influence over, the Official Australian Xbox Magazine. The company's involvement ends once it has made available to us materials we need for the magazine, and it will only read our reviews when you do.

► HOWEVER, BECAUSE we are the official magazine, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people making them. Our coverage of forthcoming titles will take you closer than ever before to the most exciting new games. We will talk to the developers and publish the best new screenshots before anyone else.

► OUR OFFICIAL STATUS allows us to get closer to every Xbox story, rooting out the truth from the rumours and speculation. Because we can go directly to the people involved, you can be assured that every story in the magazine will be accurate and truthful.

► THE OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE is part of a huge network of games journalists across the globe, ready to visit games developers wherever they are and report exclusively for the Official Xbox Magazine World Network.

► WE BELIEVE that the readers of the Official Australian Xbox Magazine are one of our most important assets. While it's our job to provide you with the demos, news, previews and reviews you need, we want to be a place where your opinions and expertise can be shared with the new Xbox community.



Editorial

E3 2002, Year of the Xbox Games Avalanche

T'S E3 MONTH, my friends (well, actually it was last month, on May 22), and my, how the tables have turned. Xbox dominated, and it's something everyone at the show with a clear head could see. Now, let me put that into perspective before anyone interprets that in the "XBOX OWNZORZ!@!" way that online forum monkeys tend to - when I say "dominated", I mean that it had the greatest presence.

First, there was Microsoft's commitment to the Xbox Live broadband gaming service. Nobody had an answer for that. I don't care how impossible the doubters think the broadband gaming service is going to be in Australia: the simple fact is we have a rough date (but understandably with possible delays), physical product (the Xbox Communicator and a dozen games to play), and a budget to work with (\$US2 billion), which is a far sight more than what anyone else has been willing to commit to.

Second, almost every single third party game had an Xbox version. That's a lot of games. And it goes without saying that, given the hardware, the Xbox versions always came out looking best.

The funny thing is, the release for a few of these third party games degenerated into a bidding war for platform exclusivity - it's one of those necessary evils in this business. But as with Nintendo, it only served to highlight the fact that there's no substitute for quality first-party software. By that I mean *Quantum Redshift*, *Mech Assault*, *Project Ego*, *Brute Force* (check out our massive feature on page 062); and last but not least, a new mascot to wave the Xbox flag: *Blink the Timesweeper*. You can read all about it in Part 1 of our E3 coverage from page 53.

I know this glowing endorsement of the Xbox sounds dubious given my association to the magazine, but it's not as though I don't wax lyrical about games on other systems (which I do on occasion). If you'll indulge me for just this one editorial, as a pure honest-to-god gaming enthusiast who has his multi-format hat on, I felt the singular unavoidable observation was that Xbox did, in fact, dominate.

Hopefully I haven't completely stolen the thunder from this month's other highlights, specifically *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (p.074) - a rare gem that defies the old unwritten law that 'all TV/movie spin-offs will suck horribly'. I also thoroughly recommend paying a visit to our DVD Essentials feature (p.056). And finally, don't forget our demo disc. There are six playable games. Six. Count 'em, biatch.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR, OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

HOT THIS MONTH

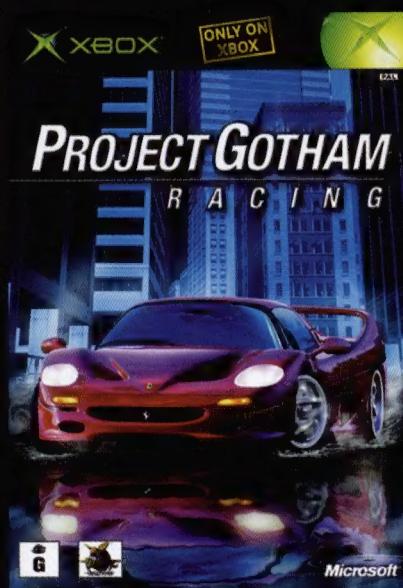
DVD ESSENTIALS
Head for page 056

BRUTE FORCE
Flip to page 062

BUFFY
Race on over to page 074

SIX PLAYABLE DEMOS
Just overleaf, page 006

**BONUS
POINTS
FOR SKID
MARKS.**

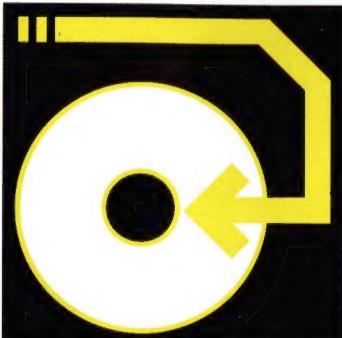


xbox.com.au

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play:more



ON THE DISC

WELCOME TO OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine Game Disc 04. This time we've really excelled in bringing you SIX huge Playable Demos. There's an entire level of *Halo* with single player and co-operative modes, and more shooting action with three full levels of *Deadly Skies*. Gamers with a craving for destruction can get into the playable demo of Rage Software's *Crash*; and finally, motorsports fans will love our playable demos of *Moto GP: Ultimate Racing Technology*, *RalliSport Challenge* and *F1 2002*.

You'll also find five fantastic Game Movies - the brutal beat-em up *UFC Tapout*; this issue's feature title *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; the promising sci-fi adventure, *Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter*; the thoroughly wacky *Taz Wanted*; and Konami's long-running soccer sim franchise, *ISS2*.

There's also an exclusive interview with chief Xbox officer Robbie Bach and you'll tingle with excitement at the *Spider-Man: The Movie* trailer.

We've also crammed in three spectacular replays from *Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions*, 'Master Chief' Kevin Cheung in a sports car and 'Legendary' Ed Lomas in an APC take on the 'Above Average' Gavin Ogden in a tank. Who's OAXM's ultimate smash master? Votes to: staff@oxm.com.au. Get into it, folks: it's time to Play:More!



The Xbox controller is your gateway to the Official Australian Xbox Magazine Game Disc. Use the directional pad or left thumbstick to highlight the menus in the right-hand window and press the A button to select. The B button returns you to the previous menu and the White button zooms in for an extreme close-up of the screen.

HALO



GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: HALO
REVIEWED: ISSUE 01, PAGE 048
SCORE: 9.7
PLAYERS: 1-2

WHAT YOU GET

To battle through the Silent Cartographer, level four of the immense *Halo*. You have the option to play alone or team-up with a friend in co-operative mode.

LEFT THUMBSTICK	DIRECTIONAL MOVE (CLICK) CROUCH
RIGHT THUMBSTICK	DIRECTIONAL LOOK (CLICK) SCOPE
DIRECTIONAL PAD	NOT USED
A BUTTON	JUMP
B BUTTON	MELEE ATTACK
X BUTTON	ACTION/RELOAD
Y BUTTON	SWITCH WEAPON
L TRIGGER	THROW GRENADE
R TRIGGER	FIRE WEAPON
WHITE BUTTON	FLASHLIGHT
BLACK BUTTON	SWITCH GRENADE

WHAT YOU DO

Buried deep beneath *Halo*'s surface is the Silent Cartographer. Storm the beach with your marines unit and find a way to shut down the Covenant security network. Once that's achieved, you'll need to fight through another network of passages to access the mysterious Cartographer itself.

TOP TIPS

Never rush into a battle when the numbers are against you. A well-placed grenade will usually scatter the enemies, giving you a brief opportunity to shoot them in the back. If you find yourself taking damage, retreat and wait for your shield to recharge.

ANYTHING ELSE?

A nippy combat vehicle called a Warthog will be yours once you have cleared the beach of Covenant. Take the driver's seat with the X button and wait for a couple of troops to join you in the back and side seats. When driving around the level in this way, these soldiers will do most of the shooting for you, leaving you free to concentrate on the driving. It's even possible to drive the Warthog through some of the heavily-guarded tunnels.



↑ Give them a cheeky slap.

FUN CHALLENGE



BEING INVISIBLE gives you an opportunity to sneak behind the Covenant and give them a swift (and instantly fatal) smack to the back of the head by pressing the B button. You'll find the invisibility near the Silent Cartographer itself and have to move quickly to beat up as many Covenant as you can before it wears off.

THE REWARD:

You get to hear the Covenant squeak with terror.

PROOF REQUIRED:

None, it's for your eyes only.

RULES:

If you're feeling really tough and/or stealthy and/or dumb, you could try melee fighting without invisibility.

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE



GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: RALLISPORT CHALLENGE
REVIEWED: ISSUE 01, PAGE 070
SCORE: 8.5
PLAYERS: 1

WHAT YOU GET

A complete playable demonstration of all trial four game modes - Rally, Hill Climb, Ice Racing and Rallycross.

LEFT THUMB STICK	STEERING
RIGHT THUMB STICK	NOT USED
DIRECTIONAL PAD	STEERING
A BUTTON	BRAKE
B BUTTON	NOT USED
X BUTTON	NOT USED
Y BUTTON	CHANGE CAMERA
L TRIGGER	BRAKE
R TRIGGER	ACCELERATE
WHITE BUTTON	RESET CAR ON TRACK
BLACK BUTTON	LOOK BACK

WHAT YOU DO

Select Rally mode for a point-to-point race on a closed public road. You can also try a point-to-point race on a mountain road in the Hill Climb. If circuits are your thing, then Ice Racing mode gives you a five lap circuit race on a treacherous frozen track. Rallycross is another challenging five lap race against three other cars.



↑ Billboard bashing blockage.

FUN CHALLENGE



ON ICE RACING mode, there are a bunch of signs at the left hand side of the first turn. On your first lap, bump into them and slowly nudge them into the centre of the road. With careful driving you can arrange them right across the path like a road block. Now all you do is wait for the other cars to complete their second lap and watch them knock the signs flying...

THE REWARD:

You get to see cars smash those pesky signs all over the place.

PROOF REQUIRED:

None.

RULES:

Just don't try this on real roads.

DEADLY SKIES

GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: DEADLY SKIES
REVIEWED: ISSUE 03, PAGE 070
SCORE: 5.2
PLAYERS: 1

WHAT YOU GET

Three varied missions from the game - through the Valley of Death, Ambush in the Jungle and Fortress on the Sands. Take flight in one of the five fighter planes available - F-15C Eagle, Mig-1.44 MFI, Su-30MKI Zhuravlik, the Tornado ADV and Eurofighter 2000.

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	PITCH AND TURN
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	NOT USED
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	UP TOGGLES MAP, DOWN TOGGLES DISPLAY
	A BUTTON	AIRBRAKE
	B BUTTON	FIRE MISSILE
	X BUTTON	SPEED BOOST
	Y BUTTON	FIRE MACHINE GUN
	L TRIGGER	LEFT RUDDER
	R TRIGGER	RIGHT RUDDER
	WHITE BUTTON	TOGGLE TARGET-COMP
	BLACK BUTTON	LOCK-ON TO LEFT
		TOGGLE TARGET-COMP
		LOCK-ON TO RIGHT

WHAT YOU DO

In Through the Valley of Death, you have ten minutes to destroy the designated targets. These are highlighted on your targeting computer as orange boxes and are represented as a red dot on your radar display. Your mission is the same in Ambush in the Jungle, although you will also have some enemy fighters to shoot down. Enemy hovercraft are on the move in Fortress on the Sands and it's your job to intercept them before they escape. Their engines are highlighted in orange, so be sure to take them out first.

TOP TIPS

It's definitely a waste of time and effort to destroy the ordinary enemies (highlighted in green on your display, or yellow on the radar). Concentrate all of your attacks on the designated targets and only destroy the enemies that are causing you major damage.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Fly towards your targets until the orange highlight around them turns red. As long as they remain in the centre of your display, you will maintain the lock for your homing missiles.



↑ Here's a nice and vulnerable aircraft carrier for your amusement.

F1 2002

GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: F1 2002
REVIEWED: ISSUE 03, PAGE 078
SCORE: 7.1
PLAYERS: 1

	LEFT THUMB STICK	STEER
	RIGHT THUMB STICK	NOT USED
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	STEER
	A BUTTON	GEAR UP
	B BUTTON	GEAR DOWN
	X BUTTON	REVERSE
	Y BUTTON	REAR VIEW
	L TRIGGER	BRAKE
	R TRIGGER	ACCELERATE
	WHITE BUTTON	CHANGE CAMERA
	BLACK BUTTON	REPLAY

WHAT YOU GET

Two laps of the Monza circuit with a choice of six drivers - Heidfeld, Massa, Villeneuve, Panis, Salo, and McNish.

WHAT YOU DO

Compete in the Italian Grand Prix. Monza has been in every Formula One championship since 1951 (apart from 1980, when the track was being upgraded) so it's a real racing tradition. Monza is a little more challenging than most European circuits, so completing two laps in first place isn't easy.

TOP TIPS

Half-way round is the Curva di Lesmos. This steep bend will cause problems if you don't slam on the brakes after the long straight. With only two laps, you'll also be wasting precious time if you take a trip down the pit lane.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Racing purists will notice that the car decals shown here are last season's. EA has promised that the finished game will have bang up-to-date details.



↑ Inches from disaster.



↑ Don't choke on the fumes!



↑ That's a fancy helmet there.



MOVIES ON THE DISC

Game Disc 04 is packed with 11 spectacular Game Movies for your joypad-free enjoyment.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Vampires like their meat bloody, but can't stand well-done stake.

UFC TAPOUT

Prize fights from inside the uncompromising UFC cage.

ISS2

Return to the hallowed turf with the age-old enemies England and Germany.

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

It's nothing to do with Star Wars but it's still brilliant.

TAZ WANTED

Has anyone actually seen a real Tasmanian Devil?

WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS

The best of our replays, as carried out by Ben, Ed and James.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF XBOX OFFICER ROBBIE BACH

He's got a great job title, but what does he do?

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE

The Green Goblin is on the rampage and Spider-Man's the only man in Lycra capable of stopping him. A top film trailer.



↑ ISS2: Goaaaallll !!!!!



↑ Wreckless... but in a tank.



play:more

MOTO GP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY

GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: MOTO GP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY

REVIEWED: ISSUE 03, PAGE 068

SCORE: 8.7

PLAYERS: 1



WHAT YOU GET

The Mugello circuit in Italy and a choice of four top drivers - Kenny Roberts (Suzuki), Shinya Nakano (Yamaha), Alex Barros (Honda) and Jurgen vd Goorbergh (Proton). There's also a rolling demo if you're hungry for more racing action.

LEFT THUMB STICK	LEANING AND RIDER POSITION
RIGHT THUMB STICK	ACCELERATE AND BRAKING
DIRECTIONAL PAD	NOT USED
A BUTTON	ACCELERATE
B BUTTON	LOOK BEHIND
X BUTTON	AUTO BRAKE
Y BUTTON	CHANGE CAMERA
L TRIGGER	REAR BRAKE
R TRIGGER	FRONT BRAKE
WHITE BUTTON	NOT USED
BLACK BUTTON	NOT USED

WHAT YOU DO

Race to victory through three laps at the Mugello Circuit - one-time home to the famous Mile Miglia road race. These days, Mugello hosts such competitions as the World Road Racing Championship, the International Touring Car Championship and the World Superbikes. Remodelled by Ferrari in 1989, the track runs for over 5,000m through woodlands and the beautiful Italian countryside.

TOP TIPS

Although it's possible to brake automatically by pressing the X button, true Moto GP experts will want to master independent control of the front and rear brakes in order to shave a few more seconds off their lap time.

ANYTHING ELSE?

There are three different weather options, clear, overcast and rainy. Check out the last one - falling sky-water has never looked more beautiful or realistic in any racing game.



↑ Wheelie fantastic!



↑ Can the USA conquer Italy?

FUN CHALLENGE

PUSH AND hold up on the left thumbstick until you pull a wheelie. With a bit of practice, you'll be able to drive for long periods with your front wheel at over 45 degrees above the ground. Time yourself and see how long you

can drive like this.

THE REWARD:

There's no prize for this, sorry.

PROOF REQUIRED:

It's just for fun so we won't ask for proof.

RULES:

Try to avoid colliding with the other drivers, which isn't that easy when you try to negotiate a corner on one wheel. Also, don't fall off the back - you'll look stupid.



CRASH

GAME INFORMATION

TITLE: CRASH

REVIEWED: ISSUE 03, PAGE 072

SCORE: 6.6

PLAYERS: 4

LEFT THUMB STICK	STEER
RIGHT THUMB STICK	NOT USED
DIRECTIONAL PAD	NOT USED
A BUTTON	HANDBRAKE
B BUTTON	NITRO
X BUTTON	HORN
Y BUTTON	NOT USED
L TRIGGER	BRAKE
R TRIGGER	ACCELERATE
WHITE BUTTON	CAMERA DOWN
BLACK BUTTON	CAMERA UP



↑ Panel-beating, Crash style.

WHAT YOU GET

Ninety seconds to wreck your opponents in the Bronx Bear Pit - a football stadium that's been converted for a stock car derby. The Free For All mode is a standard deathmatch affair: five other drivers will try their hardest to turn your car into spare parts. Damage the other

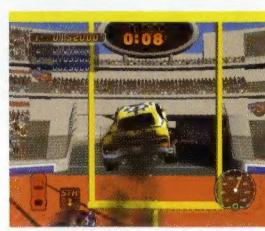
cars to score points before your destructive minute and a half ticks away. In Hunter mode you can only score by hitting the vehicle designated with a red arrow above it. At random points in the game, you may become the target, but you can then score points if you avoid the other cars.



↑ We NEED that password.



↑ Get a head-on bonus.



↑ Field goal for three points!

SHOW PONY.



Project Gotham Racing™ is the next generation racing game, where style takes poll position alongside speed. Race against up to three friends in photo-realistic downtown environments. Choose from more than 25 cars and 200 circuits. Perform behind the wheel of some of the world's hottest cars as the street circuits of four famous cities become your stage.

PROJECT GOTHAM
RACING



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ONLY ON
XBOX



DVD
VIDEO

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OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

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E3 BLOWOUT: 100 NEW XBOX GAMES

The gaming industry reveals the titles that'll propel Xbox into the 21st century.

040



LAMBORGHINI

EXCLUSIVE SCREENSHOTS of the brand that became the cars that became a game.

014



MORTAL KOMBAT

FIGHTING CLASSIC gets a much-needed next-gen makeover; we get the pics first.

012



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

TV's hottest show stomps its way in spectacular fashion on to the world's best games console.

074

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ON THE DISC: PLAYABLE

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ON THE DISC: MOVIES

- » WRECKLESS
- » TAZ WANTED
- » SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE
- » ...PLUS FIVE MORE!



DISC 04 GUIDE STARTS PAGE 006

BRUTE FORCE
Loved Halo? Good. This mammoth shooter could be the next title to rock your world. **062**

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

The Force is strong in this AOTC-inspired space-shooter from Lucasarts.

080

DVD ESSENTIALS
The top titles to own, the necessary equipment - everything you need to know to be a DVD fiend. **056**



MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE

Next-gen revamp for legendary blood-letter

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: MIDWAY

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

PLAYERS: 1-2

► BACK IN 1993, the original *Mortal Kombat* shocked the world with its photo-realistic visuals and ultra gore. Since then the series has spawned several sequels, two movies and even an animated TV series.

But following the release of *MK 4* in 1999, all things *Mortal Kombat* have been very quiet. Midway announced that a fifth *MK* game was in early stages of development but has kept its cards close to its chest... until now.

As these exclusive screens reveal, the next generation of *Mortal Kombat* is on a visual par with other spectacular beat-'em-ups such as the blistering *Tekken 4* and *Virtua Fighter 4*.

Mortal Kombat Deadly Alliance signals a brand new start for the ageing series, with Midway creating a completely new

fighting system and giving the game engine a total overhaul. The new system gives each character several different move-sets, which players are allowed to change during a fight. The days of simply guessing a ten-hit combo you've seen a million times are well and truly over.

For the first time in a *MK* game you'll see progressive physical damage rather than just the gruesome end-game money shot. As players beat each other senseless, facial bruising, black eyes and bright red cheekbones will gradually deform their sleek, catwalk features. Ain't such a pretty boy now, are ya?

Clothes will also tatter and tear as the fight progresses and players will drip blood, sweat and tears. In a crowded market, it's the little details that count.

Of course, *Mortal Kombat* just wouldn't be the same without its personalities, and Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Raiden, Jax, Sonya, Reptile and Kitana all return in high-res glory along with new additions Drahmin and Mavado.

With *Mortal Kombat* you're always guaranteed a plethora of inspired fatality moves. Whether *Deadly Alliance* delivers more than just that remains to be seen.



↑ See the exquisite quilting on Scorpion's pants? These guys have serious tailors.



↑ Subzero's poor circulation leads to subtly blued extremities.

STROLL DOWN MEMORY PAIN



THE ORIGINAL *MK* stormed the charts on no less than eight platforms way back in 1993. *MK 2* and *MK 3* were released in 1994 and 1995 respectively, with *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* hitting shelves in 1998. The fourth was released in 1999 before the series took an action-adventure direction with *MK Mythologies* and *MK Special Forces*. Love its comic gore or hate its repetitive simplicity, there's no doubt that *MK* is here to stay.



↑ Will they learn that violence isn't the answer...



↑ ...or will the maiming continue forever?



↑ Not long to wait now until Nepal's ancient temples echo with cries of pain.



↑ Kontrasting kombat styles in the now de rigueur slippy snowy level.

BONUS INFO

» **MK: BEHIND THE SCREAMS**
In line with recent movie releases on DVD which bundle the movie with extra material, Midway is putting together an extra DVD disc for the hardest of hardcore *MK* fans. Packed to bursting point with *Mortal Kombat* extras you won't see anywhere else, it'll be stuck in the green box along with the game itself. This bonus disc features a behind-the-scenes making of documentary of *Deadly Alliance*, a history of the *MK* series and an art gallery with early concept images for character designs.



↑ Such attention to lavish costumes, such a willingness to take a boot in the pods. Psychiatrists would label this lot "Nihilistic Narcissists."



**EXCLUSIVE
SCREENSHOTS**

LAMBORGHINI

High performance racing the Italian way

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RAGE

PUBLISHER: RAGE

RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2003

PLAYERS: 1-8

► TO CELEBRATE THE launch of the new Lamborghini Murcielago, Rage is creating a racer based entirely around the driving passion that is Lamborghini. Every model you dreamt of owning during childhood (or middle age) is included in the game, ready to be thrashed beyond all limits.

According to project manager Richard Badger, the idea to develop a game based around a single manufacturer came from Lamborghini's rich history of producing high performance sports cars.

"Everyone knows names like Countach, Miura and Diablo," Badger explained. "The combination of flamboyant styling and extreme performance was an attractive prospect. Now under the ownership of Audi,

Lamborghini has just launched a new car called the Murcielago, which has won awards around the world for style and also broken three world records for production car performance. This included covering 100 miles in just 30 minutes - averaging just over 200mph."

Rage is also taking the age-old racing formula to new heights with options to race for new cars online. "Lamborghini will be one of the first console games in the world to feature online racing via broadband," revealed Badger. "It will look and feel like you're racing via system link, but you could be racing anyone."

Although the single-player game will be packed with options, the thought of racing against global competition is the Xbox experience we've been waiting for.

"Having built up a collection of cars in single player, we plan to allow players to transfer their garage into an online garage," continued Badger. "We're aiming to allow racers to bet virtual cash and cars on the outcome with an online database storing lap records, richest player and each player's garage. There's also a team aspect we're currently looking at."



↑ Look out for puddles while driving - they look almost as good as the cars.



↑ The new Murcielago in all its jaw-dropping 200mph beauty.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK // LAMBORGHINI



BONUS INFO

>> CLASSIC CARS

There'll be around 20 models in the game, with unusual cars as well as the classics. Together, they trace the history of the brand, with the 350 GT, Miura, Countach, Diablo and the new Murcielago shown in several models. You can drive the Countach LP400, 5000 QV, anniversary edition or 25th GT.



↑ It looks too expensive and fast to wreck – but you're allowed to!



↑ Even a race-prepared Lamborghini should slow down in fog.



↑ Rage brought us an early copy of *Lamborghini* to play. It's blisteringly fast!

LOCATION



RAGE HAS CHOSEN nine locations from around the world in which to set the tracks, with a well-balanced mix of urban and rural racing. As players unlock the game, they'll be able to drive in Las Vegas, Hong Kong, the Italian Alps, Germany's Black Forest, Rome, Sydney, Paris, Pacific Highway and Lamborghini's Italian test track.



↑ ...and if you look behind you, you'll see the Colliseum.



↑ "I knew I was lost. This isn't Australia's Wonderland..."

SPEED 3: BADGER VISITED THE LAMBORGHINI FACTORY IN BOLOGNA WHERE HE GOT TO TEST DRIVE THE NEW MURCIELAGO. "TO MPH ON A NARROW PUBLIC ROAD IS A MEMORY I'LL NEVER FORGET," HE SAID.



TEAM SAS



Jungle warfare in your deepest, darkest living room

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RAGE

PUBLISHER: RAGE

RELEASE DATE: SPRING

PLAYERS: 1-4

MADE IN CLOSE collaboration with Andy McNab, the British 22 SAS Regiment's most famous ex member, *Team SAS* throws you into dense jungle to defeat General Piotr Kiminsky, a megalomaniacal Communist hardliner. You and your team must unravel a conspiracy dating back to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1968 as Kiminsky holds the world to ransom...

As with SCI's *Conflict: Desert Storm*, you can choose to play as either Britain's SAS or America's Rangers, as a team commander, a scout, a heavy weapons expert or a sniper. Teamwork is essential, as you have to master different roles and develop your abilities to keep one step ahead of Kiminsky's army.

Team SAS features 12 missions, which play differently every time to maximise

replay value. Along the way you'll have to battle through tribal villages, derelict working facilities, canyons and you'll even come across Aztec ruins. Sounds more like something from an episode of *Getaway*.

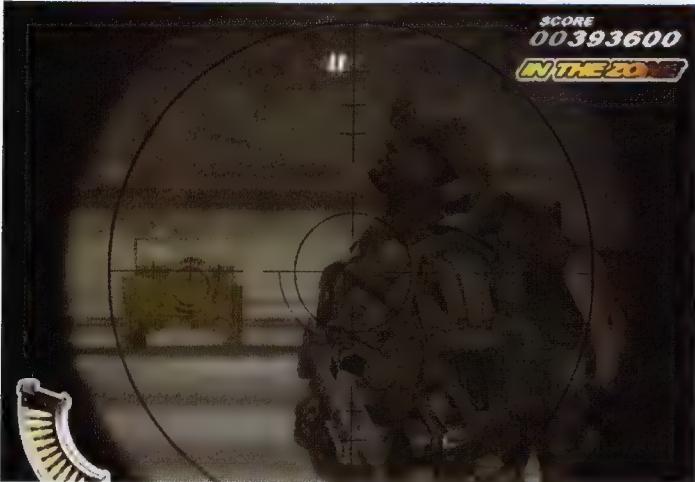
Yank or Brit, sniper or scout... whichever you choose, one thing remains constant - rock hard enemies. Rather than blocking your path with dumb goons who couldn't hit water buffalos glued to their AK-47s, *Team SAS* pits you against well-hidden snipers, grenadiers and even Black Ops terrorists. So it's you versus your evil Commie equivalents in campaigns designed to be played either alone or with up to four co-op players.

The jungle will be brought to life using a variety of effects that are only possible on Xbox. You'll see fully 3D moving foliage that will reveal you if you crash through bushes too quickly, but will also alert you to nearby patrols when they do the same. Volumetric fog provides cover, while rays of sunlight peeping through the trees will cast shadows on the sweaty jungle floor. As you can see from our world exclusive screenshots, *Team SAS* is starting to look like the real deal - tense, gritty yet fun. More next issue.

↑ Britain's SAS or the USA's Rangers - both forces use the trusty M-16 rifle.



↑ *Team SAS* uses 3D modelled moving foliage, so don't step on any twigs.



↑ Note the 'In The Zone' bar in the corner? Expect combat bonuses aplenty.



↑ Death from above – your sniper picks a prime spot near a camp.

BONUS INFO
ZERO TO HERO

Andy McNab signed up with the British infantry in 1976 as a boy soldier. In 1984 he was badged as a member of 22 SAS Regiment where he served in B Squadron for nine years. McNab has worked on both covert and overt special operations around the world, including anti-terrorist and anti-drug operations in the Middle and Far East, South and Central America and Northern Ireland. He has worked closely with Rage's programmers to provide technical input as well as a model for motion capture.



↑ Cartoon style character design and Predator-style mini-gun both suggest that Team SAS is going for a slightly arcadey feel.

YOU'RE BOOKED

DURING THE Gulf War, McNab commanded the ill-fated Bravo Two Zero patrol. McNab has written about his experiences in the SAS in two best-selling books, *Bravo Two Zero* (1993) and *Immediate Action* (1995). To date his books have sold over five million copies worldwide and been published in 17 different countries in 22 languages. This man really knows his covert operations.

↑ One shot, one kill – snipe or die.

↑ Heavy weapons provide in-unit fire support.

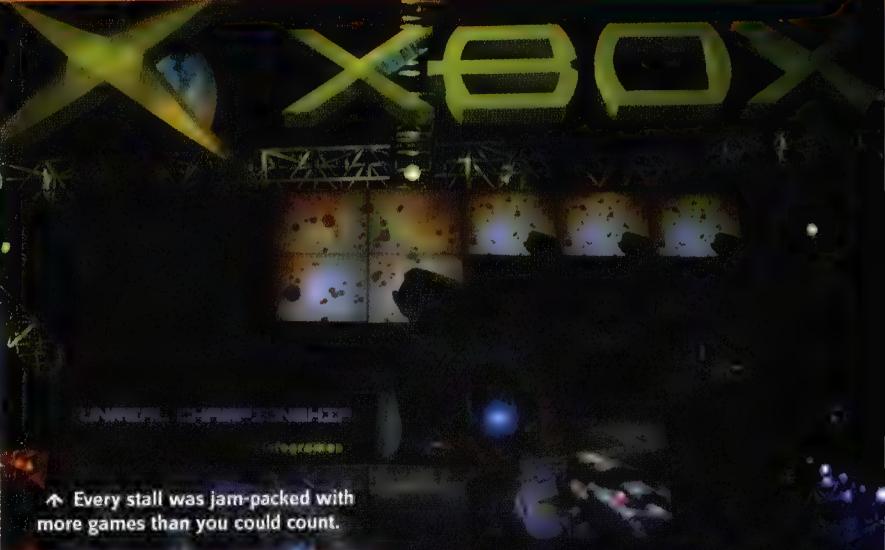
PART-TIMER: McNAB ALSO HEADS UP A SECURITY COMPANY THAT RUNS A SPECIALIST TRAINING COURSE FOR MEN'S CREWS, JOURNALISTS AND ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN WAR ZONES. THE COURSE IS THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

> ISSUE 04 017



INCOMING

LATEST NEWS // FIRST SCREENSHOTS // BRAND NEW GAMES



Every stall was jam-packed with more games than you could count.

THE BIG STORY

XBOX

XBOX BLITZES E3 2002

MS comes home with broadband and killer games



LOS ANGELES, May 22: The 2002 Electronic Entertainment Expo will be remembered by Xbox owners as the staging ground for one of the Xbox's greatest public showings ever. Microsoft spearheaded the way forward for the industry by not only unveiling its Xbox Live broadband online gaming service, but also presenting a software portfolio packed must-have games for the next twelve months.

At the top of the list was *Blinx: The Timesweeper*, a brand new mascot-based adventure game that's tipped to be the Xbox's big Christmas seller for 2002. Created by the same developers behind the *Sonic the Hedgehog* franchise, *Blinx* attracted the most attention for its creative use of the Xbox hardware. Other big hits on the show floor included *Brute Force*, *Quantum Redshift*, and *Kung Fu Chaos*.

Third party developers showed their full support for the Xbox. There were over 100 games in total from practically every developer, with games like *Panzer Dragoon ORTA*, *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, and *Steel Battalions* being amongst the show's top highlights. Tecmo also made known its next projects with video footage of *Ninja Gaiden* and *Dead Or Alive Extreme Beach Volleyball*.

Despite the excellent line-up of games, Microsoft's resources were clearly

being geared towards Xbox Live, an online gaming service that uses a unified platform for all software titles. Getting online will be as simple as plugging in an Xbox Communicator headset into the control pad and a broadband cable into the Xbox's Ethernet port.

Microsoft committed \$US2 billion to the establishment of the Xbox Live service, which will be activated in the USA, Japan and Europe in around spring this year. Local release details have yet to be finalised owing to the obvious limitations of Australia's broadband infrastructure (and a slight delay would therefore not be surprising), but Microsoft Australia is committed to making the service happen. What we do know, however, is that Xbox Live will initially be regionalised, meaning Australian, US, European and Asian Xbox owners won't be able to play against each other.

Games to be available at the launch of Xbox Live include *Unreal Championship*, *Mech Assault*, *Whacked!*, and *Midtown Madness 3*. At least another 50 titles have been confirmed for Xbox Live compatibility, including *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Counter-Strike*, *Ravenshield*, *Ghost Recon*, *NBA 2K3*, and *Phantasy Star Online*. Previous hits like *Halo*, *RallySport Challenge*, *Amped* and *Project Gotham Racing* have also been earmarked for the Live network.

More details about E3 at page 040.



ONE TO WATCH

//GAME: TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL
//DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT

One reason it tops Metal Gear Solid 2: No stupid exclamation marks on top of the soldiers' heads.

ALTHOUGH MICROSOFT is clearly targeting the younger and broader mainstream market with *Blinx*, Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell* was our top choice for the game of E3 2002. Originally featured last month (Issue 03, p.012), *Splinter Cell* knocked our socks off for both its style and substance. If you thought *Metal Gear Solid* made you think outside the square, *Splinter Cell* will make it painfully obvious how limited in design *Metal Gear Solid* and its sequel are.

With visuals that make *Solid Snake* look like a cartoon, *Splinter Cell* is an edgy, earthier game with an intuitive control system, smart graphical user interfaces and most importantly, camera angles to show off the game's weapons and high-tech gadgetry. One of the coolest features of the E3 demo was the chewing gum camera, where players who aren't sure about what's behind the next door can shoot a small camera through the door jamb to a corner on the opposite side.



LOOPIEST GAME

//GAME: DAVE MIRRA BMX XXX
//DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM

You'd think 'X' is for 'eXtreme', but Acclaim reminded us of the symbol's other more well established meaning...

WITHOUT EXCEPTION, *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* earned a universal "WTF?" from everyone who was given a demonstration. The "XXX" is for real: nude girls riding on bikes, players earning money to unlock peep shows that feature live footage of young women getting their gear off, and sub-missions like finding a female dog

to copulate with a male dog who's leaving his poop all over the track. Amazed? We definitely were - especially by the show demonstrator who commented, quite casually, that they haven't perfected the boob physics yet. *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* is scheduled for release around the end of 2002.



OUR VIEW

//NAME: OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE
//JOB: TO CUT TO THE CHASE AND TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Good for new owners, good for early adopters, and the more players out there, the better it is for everyone.

E3 is always an indicator of the health of the industry, and despite their competition, the truth of the matter is that we really want all three companies - Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony - to do well.

Xbox had an amazing showing - make no mistake about that - and the games for the coming year are creating intense excitement. Every game looked fantastic. The Xbox exclusives were impressive, and the third party titles all looked fantastic in their Xbox forms.

What disappoints us, however, is the attitude of the competition, specifically Sony. Sony seems more concerned with publicising the fact that they're number one in the market than actually putting out decent games.

Everyone's more than aware that the PlayStation 2's been out for about a year longer than everyone else. That's why it has the larger user base. It's also why the games already look outdated, leaving Microsoft and Nintendo (which did the noble thing, kept its head down and promoted its games) to carry the hopes of game developers who want to do something innovative with the medium.

With so much third party support, however, and an equally large backing of first-party software, there's little reason for Xbox owners to keep a wary eye over the fence. The Xbox is growing steadily, and we'll be taken care of with games of the highest calibre. And that's all that matters to us.

Headlines

HALO: SALES FIGURES

The world's best video game hits the magical million PLUS large rigs in rough racing with *Big Mutha Truckers*.

020

THE MOLE

Rumours, speculation and insider gossip from The Mole. If it's happening behind closed doors for the Xbox, he'll know.

021

FILA TENNIS

Sports stars wear branded gear PLUS even more product-endorsing gaming in *Mercedes Benz World Racing*.

022

HARDWARE IN FOCUS

A technical breakdown of some of the great special effects you'll find in *Project Gotham Racing*.

023

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

Ancient Roman driving game with just a hint of combat PLUS World War 2 escape dramas in unhappy prison camper POW.

024

HARDWARE

By far the biggest joystick you're ever likely to see is tested alongside more third party controllers PLUS E3 roundup.

025

TWIN CALIBER

Twin handgun, 360° gunfighting in the form of *Twin Caliber* PLUS customisable online fantasy gaming with *Shining Lore*.

026

ROCKY

All the movies, all the characters, all the settings... quite possibly the most complete movie tie-in game of all time.

027

MORROWIND

More fantasy RPG questing with *Morrowind* PLUS 2000AD artwork, space piracy and ship-to-ship combat in *Falcone*.

028

BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

Future warfare combines tanks, infantry and you in a massive transforming robot in the latest *Gun Metal* rival.

029

X-MEDIA

The latest in movie, music, and online entertainment. Check out *Ghost World*, *American Pie 2* and more!

030

CHARTS

What's selling, what's not and how today's fast-risers will be next month's Xbox best sellers.

031



INCOMING

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

BACH IN JAPAN

Chief Xbox officer Robbie Bach has said that Japanese gamers are buying more titles for Xbox than they did for PlayStation 2 during the launch period. "Japan is going well on the software side but is a little behind where we want to be on the hardware side," he said. "We always expected things would be tough. Microsoft has demonstrated patience and persistence in Japan before and I think we will do very well over there."

MARVELOUS NEWS FOR COMIC FANS

THQ has joined forces with Marvel Enterprises to create games based on Marvel's hottest properties. Over the next few years you'll be seeing Xbox games featuring *Captain America*, *The Punisher* and *Nick Fury*.

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

Fans of the World Cup can get their hands on the action with the officially licensed Thrustmaster FIFA controller. For the cool price of \$59.95, the pad differs from the normal version by featuring the World Cup 2002 Korea-Japan logo along with a fancy green colour scheme surrounding the sticks, buttons and triggers.

ENEMY AT THE GATES

French developer 4X Studios has unveiled a shooter by the name of *Stalingrad* for release later this year. Set in 1942 during the decisive battle for the city, the game throws you into the grubby uniform of an elite sniper. Already there's talk of a unique co-operative mode.

HALO STORMS JAPAN

Early indications from Japan have revealed that *Halo* entered the All Format Top 10 charts in an impressive fourth position. Not only is this highest entry yet for any Xbox game in Japan, but it's also an amazing achievement for a first-person shooter on any format. In the past, the whole genre has gone down as well as a dose of Ebola. Could this prime spot for the flagship title be the turning point for Xbox's fortunes in Japan? Only time will tell...

HALO SALES PASS 1M

That's six copies sold every minute of every day...

WITH XBOX WELL and truly on the global map, it didn't take long for sales of its killer app *Halo* to crash through the million barrier. Since its November 15 launch in the US and Canada, it's also become the fastest million-unit selling game of all time on any next-gen console.

Not to be outdone by the Yanks, *Halo* is also taking Australian Xbox gamers by storm. According to marketing researcher Inform, a good majority of all Xbox owners have bought Bungie's shooter.

With such a high attachment rate, *Halo* will be a difficult game to beat for any title that aspires to become the next bestseller on Xbox - and especially so

with the recent price drop. All that remains now is the tough Japanese market, which, from the looks of things (see column below), is slowly warming to the flagship first-person shooter.



↑ A million *Halo*s is a lot of games.



↑ They would make a teetering stack...



↑ ...of over nine miles in height.



↑ If the boxes were laid end-to-end...



↑ ...a million copies would stretch...

↑ ...up to a good 130 miles.

WANTED: BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

Control the highways in an 18 wheel articulated big rig



EMPIRE INTERACTIVE has snatched up Eutechnyx's *Big Mutha Truckers* for an Xbox release this Christmas. The game puts players in the driving seat of an 18-wheel rig, travelling from city to city in an attempt to build up a personal fortune and live happily ever after. Easier said than done, though.

The long and lonely journeys from state to state will be spiced up by attacks from local biker gangs and bent coppers. There'll even be the odd creepy inbred redneck. Think Ned Beatty. Think *Deliverance*. Whichever side of the law they reside on, and regardless of whether they married their sister Lurlene, each

one's trying to take what's yours. Eutechnyx has previously worked on driving games for Eidos, EA and Infogrames, with the last project being the quality multi-platform racing marathon that is *Le Mans 24 Hours*.



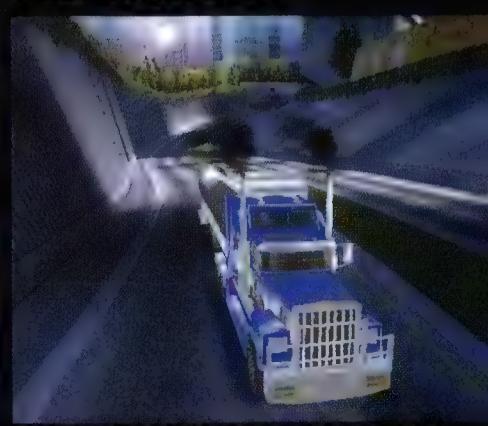
↑ Downhill, top gear, full load...



↑ "Take me home, country road."



↑ Bad lieutenant. Worse trucker.



↑ The handling of a big rig can only be guessed at.



HARDWARE IN FOCUS

Matt Wolfs walks us through some of the subtler graphical wizardry of *Project Gotham Racing*.

LET'S GET the obvious out of the way. *Project Gotham Racing* is a marvellous game. Its fantastic gameplay and replay value played a large part in our decision to score it 8.9 (Issue 01, p63), but we haven't had many opportunities to sing our praises for its visuals. Thanks to this new column, that's no longer a problem. This issue we'll look at two of the subtler visual elements in *Project Gotham Racing*.

First, we'll look at the car models. In a word: stunning. Developer Bizzare Creations packed 12,000-16,000 polygons into each car model, with individual drivers taking up around 500 polygons. These are big numbers, especially considering the game *Project Gotham* has been compared to most, *Gran Turismo 3* on the PS2, which has only 4,000-5,000 polygons for each of its cars, and they don't even have drivers.

Better still, if you really want to ram home the differences, just compare the same model vehicles between *GTA 3* and *PGR*. The extra grunt of the Xbox's graphics hardware really shows through here, with the cars in *PGR* looking immaculately detailed to the point of even having 3D rims!

What's more impressive is *PGR*'s use of real-time environment mapping - aka reflections. Using the pixel and

vertex shaders in tandem, *PGR* uses a technique known as 'Fresnel' lighting. In simple terms, it determines the amount of reflection on the angle between the surface normal (the direction of the solid side of a front-facing polygon) and the viewer (you). The more head-on you view a surface, the less reflection you will see. To see this effect in action in *PGR*, open up new colours for your cars in the Medal Mode, and go for a spin around town in a chrome-based colour. Think that's pretty? Wait till

you see it at night in the rain: it's utterly mind-blowing.

Bear in mind the fact that all these effects are done in real-time. That is, it's done on-the-fly, during the game. Even though Xbox owners can happily take these effects for granted, they are no mean feat: *GTA 3* could only manage precomputed (fake) reflections. *PGR*'s use of real-time environment reflections is a first in console games, and certainly won't be a last. For a launch title, *PGR* is an achievement that will stand in the minds of anyone with a serious interest in 3D graphics.



↑ Night time racing in wet conditions produces some great visual effects.

PHANTOM CRASH

Robot wars on the streets (and televisions) of Japan

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

DEVELOPER: GUNDO
PUBLISHER: PHANTASIA
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

A FEW OF us will have actually been to Shinjuku, Japan, but most of us will already have spent several hours there. We'll have mounted its kerbs with style in *Project Gotham*, or left our inimitable graffiti tag over its back alleys in *JSRF*. We've now got the chance to go to war there, as near-future Tokyo crumbles under the onslaughts of pollution and global warming.

The city has been evacuated after being declared hazardous, but since

nothing goes to waste in the overcrowded Far East, the deserted site has been redesigned a super-arena for the sport of "Rumbling." And, this being Japan, the new sport involves robots. Really big ones. Ones that provide close-quarters explosive combat strictly for the entertainment of TV audiences.

The attack vehicles on offer are called Scoobees but don't let this cuddly nickname put you off. They're huge and they come with massive arsenals as standard, not to mention cloaking devices for snakey hide 'n' seek tactics.

As you can see from the pics, this isn't going to be gritty or realistic in the slightest, and we hope the main focus will be on having big, bold dollops of mechanoid fun. Giant robotic pandas are unconfirmed at this early stage, but we'll update you in the coming months should such an unlikely addition occur.



↑ Downtown Shinjuku takes a pounding.



↑ "O! That was my fish & chip shop!"

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

MICROSOFT REVISES PROJECTIONS

Following slower than expected launches in Europe and Japan, Microsoft has revised its projected sales forecast for Xbox. Chief financial officer John Connors said during a recent conference call that the firm now expects to sell 3.5 million to 4 million units of Xbox in its 2002 fiscal year that ends June 30. Microsoft had previously forecast sales between 4.5 and 6 million units for the same period.

NEW TIDBITS ON BLACKLEY

If you kept up with our report from last issue, you'll know that the man who was largely responsible for the Xbox, Seamus Blackley, has departed Microsoft for greener pastures. Our latest information has it that he and a few colleagues are setting up new games publishing company specifically for games that are newer and bolder by design.

SHINY FINDS NEW HOME

Infogrames has snatched up Shiny Entertainment and its *Matrix* games. The French-based publishing giant splashed out around \$47 million for the developer, which previously gave us *MDK* and *Sacrifice*. Through the deal with Interplay, Infogrames now has the exclusive rights to develop and publish games based on Keanu Reeves-starring movie sequels *The Matrix: Reloaded* (out next year) and *The Matrix: Revolutions*.

SECOND INCUBATOR GAME ANNOUNCED

Vision Games is the second studio to announce a game from Microsoft's Xbox Incubator Program. The program is available to developers who want to commit resources to a title using an official Xbox Development Kit (XDK) before securing deals with publishers. Look for exclusive details on both Imagine's *Chase* and Xavier Fox's *The Lost City* - games in the program - in our next issue.



INCOMING

State of Play



JAPAN

HI AUSTRALIA. This month, since it launched on April 25, I'd like to talk about *Halo* from a Japanese gamer's point of view.

First of all, the first-person shooter is not popular in Japan. I guess the reason is that the PC market in Japan is very small, and that very few Japanese people are familiar with guns. Most of them have never seen a real gun and in general, the Japanese prefer combative sporting heroes of the kind seen in *Street Fighter*.

So what about *Halo* for the Japanese gamer? High-level graphics and sounds will pass the test for most of them.

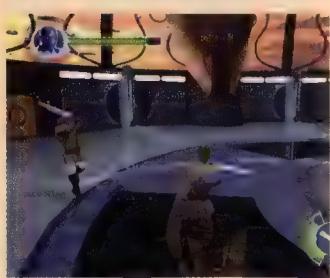
Needless to say, I love it. And the good point is it's easy to play with a well thought-out control method. Maybe the best selling point will be the story. It's very dramatic, like the best Hollywood action movies.

However, it does have its bad points. First, some of the level designs are not good. There are a lot of similar images, repeated textures and the same configurations. Sometimes I missed my way to an exit. Second, the TV animation generation loves more detailed design and textures.

Yes, I know they are really small problems, but I can't help but imagine that if Bungie was to make a game about *Gundam* or *Star Wars* on Xbox, or do a collaboration with Sega or Square, Xbox sales in Japan would double overnight.

How about it, Bill?

Koji Aizawa
Editor in Chief
Famitsu Xbox
Japanese Xbox Magazine



↑ How might Bungie do *Star Wars*?

CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS

A different kind of two-wheeled racing

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION
DEVELOPER: KODAK
PUBLISHER: THQ
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002

WE ENJOY HAVING sweaty, burly men tell us that we are weak [when he says "we", he means "I"] - *Comfortable With Life Choices Ed*. It's an essential part of any good learning experience, and the tutorial mode in *Circus Maximus* has the requisite gravel-voiced-drill-instructor-meets-Oliver-Reed type doling out the spirit-breaking sass talk. We are worthless. We are not worthy.

There's a lot more to riding a horse-drawn cart than whipping some nags and looking like Charlton Heston. We waded through 16 lessons before earning our 'wheels', and were in good stead to

start on the main Career mode that sees your character elevated from a lowly newbie, wet behind the helmet, into an all-powerful symbol of national pride for the Roman Empire. Well, that's the general idea, anyway.

Alternatively, you can trundle your way through the arcade mode, a series of 19 racetracks that allow for little else but a bloody sprint for the finish line.

While it's a novel concept, it does tend to play very shabbily at the moment. We'll have more for you when we get it.



↑ Shoving off the road works a treat.



↑ Autopilot lets you fight more...



↑ ...but it's too slow to win you races.



↑ Those screens in the back hide the dirty, stinking boggs.



↑ A Cooler-King style look of disdain is essential.



↑ You must be back for roll call.

PRISONER OF WAR

There's a file in the cake, and a Jerry on top

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION
DEVICER: WIDE GAMES
PUBLISHER: CODE MASTERS
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002

YOU MAY HAVE heard a few whispers about *Prisoner of War* in the online community, but thanks to Sgt Attaway's continuing efforts for the cause, we were able to get our hands on some hot contraband in the form of

brand new preview code. As Jonner played the fool and distracted the Kommandant with a nifty card trick, we got to grips with an early mission from the game...

After getting to know our fellow campers, we began to slowly hatch an escape plot which involved liberating a key from the German barracks. A plentiful supply of boot polish meant that we could have easily tried a nighttime approach, skulking past spotlights and snoozing guards. Shades of *Metal Gear Solid* here, with the game allowing for some wall-clinging, corner-peaking and sniping under buildings for stealth.

A first-person mode is also available.

But instead, Lieutenant James Daly, bloody good chap that he is, volunteered to cause a ruckus during morning exercise, letting us slip daringly in the back door and pocket the key.

As we made it back to our hut in time for afternoon roll call, Fritz was none the wiser. Will we ever make a great escape? Will the finished version contain everything we hope for? Find out on these very pages, very soon.

HARDWARE

Still looking to fill all four controller slots?



INTERVIEW
POWERPAD PRO
PRICE: \$59.95
RELEASE: OUT NOW

 WE REVIEWED the Pro-less Powerpad back in Issue 02, where it scored a respectable 4/5. This pad, however, takes an ungainly totter backwards as the 'improvement' is moulded rubber on the prongs of the pad. And nothing else.

The grip, made from ribbed rubber (for his/her pleasure) is nice, and offers a firmer purchase on the pad without having to clutch it like the horns of a rodeo bullock.

There's little improvement elsewhere. The directional pad is virtually the same,



THURSTMASTER
TOP GUN FOX 2 PRO
PRICE: \$99.95
RELEASE: OUT NOW

and still better than the official one, while the Start and Back button set has skipped over to the left of the d-pad, like on the Controller S.

The analogue set-up feels worse, with less responsive sticks and triggers. Thumbsticks in particular seem a lot slacker, making delicate movements tricky. The White and Black buttons have, irrationally, been made even smaller, shunted closer together, and are harder to use than ever.

SCORE 3/5

IT'S A FINE STICK, this - the handle is well moulded and the buttons are all within easy reach, even the added throttle cross-fader. It sits without slipping on any hard surface and a dial on its underbelly allows you to vary the joystick resistance.

At the moment, though, this is hardware luxury since *Deadly Skies* is the only game to fully accommodate it. And, try as we might, we couldn't find a control config that would sit comfortably with *Gun Metal*. Maybe if Microsoft ever saw fit to start converting some of their infamously vast back-catalogue of flight sims to Xbox, then this would become essential for hardcore wingmen.

So, it's good, but only the truly hardcore flight nuts need apply.

SCORE 4/5

KIT AT E3

Hardware goes to The Show

 THERE'S MORE to E3 than the unveiling of swanky new video games, y'know. All these publishers hold your heart in the palm of their hand, and they can set it aflutter or crush it like a tomato with a single piece of software news. But hardware producers will have plenty to say, too.

Radica revealed an Xbox light gun in the Gamester range, perfect for zombie-culling fans with itchytriggafingaz in *House Of The Dead 3*.

Similarly, Joytech will have an entire range of new goodies. Chief amongst them is the Williams F1 Team Racing Wheel, designed in conjunction with official F1 bods, and the controller Mark 2, a titchier version of their Advanced controller. A third-party answer to Controller S? We think very much so.

Saitek showed off new additions to their Adrenalin range, including an RF Pad, an RF Wheel and a new, improved iteration of their readily-available joypad. We'll review all of this asap.



↑ Dance like a Can Can girl for your attempt at goal glory.

AND FINALLY...

Revolutionary World Cup add-on? Or curious oddity?

 WITH THE 2002 FIFA World Cup fever upon us, Thrustmaster has seen fit to develop an interactive mat designed to recreate all the action of a football match... only without grass. Or players. Or a ball. Instead, three motion sensors detect the player's movements and reproduce them in the game - although kicking over your bedside

lamp won't be shown in-game or impress your mother.

The sensors cover shoot, pass, lob and defensive skills. You can also adjust the power by keeping your foot hovering above the sensor. You'll also need a regular game pad to control directional movements, forcing you to stand up and play while leaping like one of *Riverdance*. The words 'own' and 'goal' spring instantly to mind.

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

BRAND AWARENESS

TDK Mediactive has scored the rights to create games based on TV shows, specifically *The Muppet Show* and Mattel's *Robotech* universe. The latter's a bit of a sore point with gamers after the *Crystal Dreams* debacle on the Nintendo 64, but this latest game is going to be fully cel-shaded; and based on what was at E3 it should turn out great.

GAMES EXCHANGE

You wanted it, so you've got it. As of Issue 06, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* will be running a small Classifieds section for readers wanting to sell or swap their gaming gear. Send your Wanted, For Sale and For Exchange ads (plus contact info like address, telephone number or email) to Classifieds, *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355; or email us at staff@oxm.com.au. Entries for Issue 06 close on July 29.

MEMORIES ON XBOX

September sees the first game to emerge from Konami's recently established European research and development studio. *Shadow of Memories* was originally released on PS2 back in 2001 and saw you in the role of Eike, a luckless fool who's murdered and stuck in limbo. But after a quick chat with a mysterious figure, you're faced with altering his destiny so that ultimately, his murder will be prevented.

FEEL MY WRATH

LucasArts has acquired the rights from The Collective to publish the dragon-busting arena-based fighter *Wrath*. Due for an Xbox release sometime in 2003, *Wrath* is best summed up as an arcade-style fighter with turn-based elements featuring huge battles between fantastical beasts in wide open arenas.

BARBARIAN REBORN

Titus has announced *Barbarian's* Xbox release later this summer. Inspired by the 8-bit decapitation classic, the gritty sword-em-up pits you against the evil forces of the ridiculously named Zaugg.



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

HALO SCORES BIG IN JAPAN

Highly respected Japanese gaming publication *Weekly Famitsu* put *Halo* to the test recently and gave it a very respectable score of 33/40 (9/8/7/9). The most famous of all Japanese games magazine, *Famitsu* lets four reviewers loose on its games. The quartet then each submit a mark out of ten; the final score is obtained by adding them together.

PLAY MORE, SWEAT LESS

If the excitement of hammering away at your favourite game gives you sweaty palms, then Nyko Technologies are here to help. At this year's E3, the company unveiled the Air Flo game controller, which provides gamers with a consistent flow of air through the controller handles. So now you can keep a cool head and fingers while under fire.

TOKYO GAME SHOW DATED

Following the cancellation of the Tokyo Game Show spring event last year, the next TGS will take place on September 20-22. Less games companies will be attending the event than usual and it has been opened up to include products from educational software, music and mobile games markets.

SPLINTER CELL RENAMED

As we revealed in our exclusive First Look section in Issue 03, Ubi Soft had originally removed any reference to the Tom Clancy franchise from the name *Splinter Cell* so that it might more ably compete directly with *Metal Gear Solid 2*. However, since the Tom Clancy name went down so well in the US during E3, Ubi Soft have changed their minds again and have gone back to calling the game *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*.

SHREK IN EFFECT

TDK has extended its *Shrek* film licence to include forthcoming sequel, the imaginatively named *Shrek 2*. Let's hope it's better than the dismal first game.

TWIN CALIBER



Grab it with both hands

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RAGE

PUBLISHER: RAGE

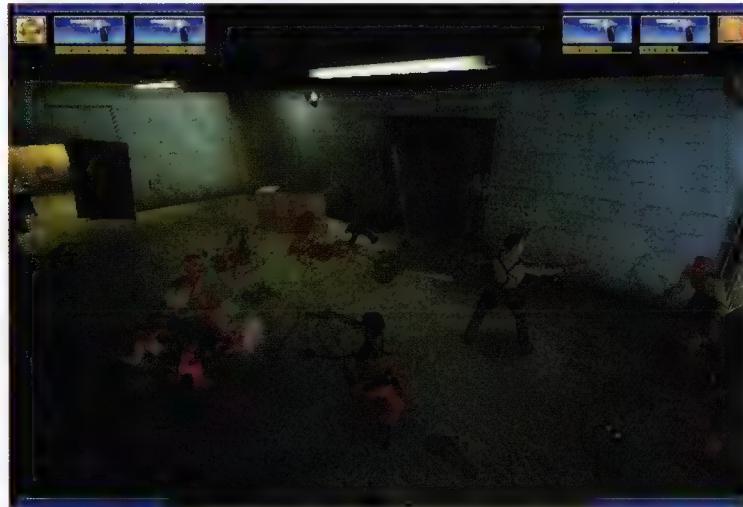
RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2003

JOHN WOO TAUGHT us that one gun is never enough; *The Matrix* pointed out that two guns don't always get the job done. But what if you can point both guns in different directions at the same time...

Twin Caliber uses both thumbsticks to control the left and right arms of your character independently, allowing for a complete 360° of rapid-fire carnage. The game plays in a similar way to light-gun titles like *Time Crisis*, where the camera moves through the levels on rails, giving you the odd breather before throwing you back to the wolves.

As our world exclusive screenshots show, co-op mode is displayed on one screen rather than a split-screen, allowing for some serious big-screen fun.

Twin Caliber was unveiled to the world at E3 on May 22 and is due out next Autumn. You saw it here first, and you'll see it here again in future issues.



↑ Gunning for glory.



↑ Four guns, one baddie left, one result.



↑ Check every dark corner.



↑ Prison cell shoot outs rule.

SHINING LORE



What Schoolfriends.com.au should've really been like

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: PHANTOM RAY

PUBLISHER: PHANTOM RAY

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2003

GAMES BASED around massive and persistent global online communities have really taken off in the past few years. Think of PC titles such as *Everquest* and *Ultima Online*.

And although *Shining Lore* may not be the first to offer players an elaborate and highly customisable online RPG world in which to indulge, it's certainly the first to not take itself too seriously. Its cutesy looks, however, shouldn't distract

from what appears to be an ambitious and sophisticated title.

Besides the expected features - meeting and then forming a band of plucky questers to embark on a quest together - you can build your own house and create a bespoke wardrobe. There are also arcades dotted around the lands of *Shining Lore*, allowing players to indulge in mini-games together.

Also included is a potentially great chat function, where your in-game avatars sit around a table and have a good old natter. It should be much like any private internet chatroom, but with your own personal characters grinning and jiggling with laughter taking the welcome place of a tired old smiley emoticon. As hard as it is to imagine, the future of online gaming may not only be about deathmatches...



↑ Battle Chess is one of the many mini-games...



↑ ...but there's plenty of questing to be done.



↑ "If he dies, he dies." For some reason, it's Gav's top *Rocky IV* quote.

ROCKY

The Lord of the Ring is back to collect his crown

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION
DEVELOPER: RAGE
PUBLISHER: RAGE
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

WITH ALL HIS celluloid victories behind him, Rocky Balboa is about to face his toughest challenge yet. It's harder than chasing chickens to improve his footwork; more potentially humiliating than wearing unfortunate woolly hats in public. He's back, and this time he's starring in a boxing game, a genre not really known for its entertainment value.

Not only that, but it's a licensed film tie-in too... unclean! The bookies would peg *Rocky* down as a rank outsider, but the pundits who've played it - like us - would more likely hock it as a hot tip.

Showing a lot of promise, the game also demonstrates determination to marry slick boxing action with - get this - fun. As Mark Sample, a designer at Rage, said: "We have deliberately tried to combine accessibility and realism with the fluidity and response of the more evolved Japanese style of fighting games, as we want to make a game that will appeal to boxing fans and fighting game fans alike."

The finished code will have an ambitious career mode drawing heavily on characters, locations and events of all

five movies, including training modes centred around thumping a side of beef as wise old trainer Mickey doles out the advice. With baddies like Drago as the boss characters in this mode, the entire game seems to convey the whole *Rocky* experience uncannily well.

It plays well too. Accurate punches are a wince-worthy experience as faces sag, swell and split so convincingly, you may feasibly find yourself moaning "Adrian!" through closing eyelids. *Rocky* looks set to be one of the best uses of a film licence in a long time.

CLOUTER



↑ They've got the look down to a T.



↑ He walked into a door.

KEEP THE FAITH

THE ESSENCE of the *Rocky* series seems to have been captured accurately. It's all here - the music, the movie sets and the mannerisms.

Every boxer has been re-created in thick-necked glory. King of sting Apollo Creed bobs, weaves and butterflies his way around the ring like only he can, whilst Ivan Drago is a firmly rooted engine-block of a man with the ability to throw humourless Russian taunts and donkey-killing straights.

Rocky's various film guises are all here. *Rocky*'s a bit flabby, *Rocky II* has buff abs and the right amount of bouffant hair, whilst later Balboas are better groomed and less fresh-faced.

IN MY OPINION

Get ready for anarchy online...

ANOTHER YEAR, another E3, and what a glorious festival it was. Another orgy of unbridled corporate evangelism, with giant spires of excess climbing towards the ceiling of the packed LA Convention Centre. Not as glamorous as the heady bubble economy years of the late nineties, but tinged as ever with greed and desperation.

For the years of explosive growth are behind us, and video gaming is now a mature, stable industry. Every company strutting its stuff at E3 is in it for the long haul. For gaming supremacy in the 21st century, that means online entertainment. The air at the show was full of buzzwords, to be sure. Massively multiplayer, virtual worlds that will change the way we think about all the staid old genres. But the real reason the big three are getting online isn't because they think it'll give us better games.

It's because it will make them more money. Subscriber services will do their best to soak up every spare minute, and every disposable dollar. Nintendo and Sony, with their low-key plans, were fairly blasé about their online rollout. But Microsoft, with its new Xbox Live service, was making as much noise as possible. If you thought that half a billion US dollars was a lot for their initial marketing plan, then you ain't seen nothing yet.

Chairman Bill is spending US \$2 billion to get Xbox Live up and running. Not out of charity; he expects to make that money back, and more besides. Check the mail next year, and there'll be a new kind of bill. Water, phone, power - and Xbox. The future is going to cost us. And it may be more than we can afford.

Taren Capell is an independent journalist. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Official Australian Xbox Magazine.



INCOMING

State of Play



UK

IT'S SUMMER HERE in the UK, the weather is great, the Queen is celebrating 50 years on the throne, and nobody cares. There are a slew of great games out for all three consoles, and nobody cares. It's the World Cup, and given that England hasn't been knocked out in embarrassing fashion yet all eyes are on Japan and Korea.

Of course, Microsoft isn't about to miss a good marketing opportunity here. With Nike ads featuring stars playing three-on-three football in a cage flooding the airwaves, Microsoft teamed up with Nike to sponsor a real tournament based on the ad at London's Millennium Dome. Xbox pods and logos filled the interior and provided a welcome break from the action in the cage.

In another clever tie-in, Amazon.co.uk provided the English team with books, CDs, DVDs and games to "inspire" them, including an Xbox with titles like *Halo* (play co-op for team bonding!), *Championship Manager* (for those who don't make the starting eleven) and *FIFA World Cup* (surprise!). How wise this is when reserve goalkeeper David James once blamed his lack of concentration on playing too much Tekken and Tomb Raider is debatable.

Away from football, E3 came and went. It was a solid showing, and no doubt *Blinx*, *Knights of the Old Republic* and *Panzer Dragoon ORTA* will be big titles this holiday season, but you do feel their minds are elsewhere. The focus is clearly on Xbox Live, but Microsoft need it to launch on time this Fall (that's spring for us - Ed) to have a truly stellar line-up. Will it? Probably in the US, but Europeans have a reason to be sceptical of the release date. It's more complicated to set up a network across several countries (each of course with their own technical standards). And it's Europe. Things are always delayed here. It's as inevitable as an Australian failure to qualify for the World Cup!*

Ravi Hirani
UK Correspondent

*Ravi was given a sound beating by a few mates we called after that insensitive little quip.

FALCONE: INTO THE MAELSTROM

Hijacking, hit and run, armed robbery... but in space!

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION
DEVELOPER: VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
PUBLISHER: VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

WOULDN'T IT BE lovely if, during your hasty opening chapter escape from *Halo*'s Pillar Of Autumn, you could commandeer one of the lifeboats and make the escape yourself? This is the kind of immersive freedom that *Falcone* is mooted to offer players, as they fill the buckled boots of a grizzled space pirate performing daring raids on convoys of dreadnoughts.

The big promise from developers Virgin Interactive is that you'll be able to switch seamlessly between ship combat and first person mode as you dock with dreadnoughts or hijack vessels for fun and profit. Not, in fact, entirely unlike that other other Xbox debutante *Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter*, then.

Players will be required to choose between two warring pirate factions, then join their band of merry men as they scour the universe for booty, plunder and possibly some kind of prized astro galaxi-grog. There will be 12 extended missions in the one-player campaign, and if nothing else, they should all look gorgeous.

That's because the visual stylings and plot will be provided by the comic book talents of *2000AD*'s Jim Murray and Robbie Morrison. Our tracking beams are focused firmly on this one - you'll get more info as we capture it.



↑ Look at his gun; pray he's a friend.



↑ Tax disc, coffee mug - comedy details abound.



↑ Nice and detailed, as all spaceships should be.

ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

Your game world needs you. And when we say "world", we actually mean it

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION
DEVELOPER: BETHESDA SOFTWORKS
PUBLISHER: TBA
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST 2002

IT'S ALWAYS YOU they come running to, isn't it? But then, it's because you're such a hero. You've saved nations of little computer people, salvaged dozens of virtual worlds from Armageddon, got

more girls and reaped more riches than Robbie Williams in a sequin thong. And all in time for *Better Homes & Gardens*.

And now, *Morrowind* needs you too. The threat of plague hangs over a population who need a hero to sort things out. How exactly you go about doing it through this sprawling first-person role-playing adventure, is pretty much up to you. Wanna be a wizard, a priest, a bard or an assassin? Rogue rebel or do-gooder? You got it.

Morrowind is the kind of game that'll require several dozen hours of play before

you can even begin to form an opinion about the world. It's hugely ambitious and just plain huge, filled with thousands of characters and ten square miles of mystery to explore.

But the fact that after seeing mere sections, we're eager to explore more is a promising sign. And we're glad to say that a stunning water effect that Bethesda were unsure would make into the Xbox version has now been fully implemented. It's a sublime chunk of visual quality that looks wonderful, but especially lovely during a rain storm.



↑ A nifty line in tunics.



↑ Don't worry. It won't nab your hat.



↑ Ride this giant flea between towns.



BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

Space combat epic on course for big things

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: LOST TOYS
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAPHICS
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

AFTER LAST MONTH'S first look at screenshots (page 033), Lost Toys let us into their Guildford stronghold to take a peek at the latest build of *Battle Engine Aquila* in action. And the outlook is still good.

Demonstrating the AI of the two colliding armies, Lost Toys Director Jeremy Longley parked his battle engine on a hill and let us watch the carnage below. "We've got the sophisticated AI of an RTS (real-time strategy) game, except we let the player get right into the thick of the action," said Longley, as we

watched dozens of tiny men take on a variety of nasty metallic battleships.

But despite the sophistication evident in the game's action, the player's task is decidedly simple. As just one of many units, you have to fight against the other side until one of you wins.

But how you approach things is up to you - don't feel you must keep an eye on your buddies if you want to go off elsewhere. Even if you fly off to do your own thing, you'll still be able to keep tabs on your side's progress thanks to the handy icon in the bottom right of the screen (see below).

As you can see from these new screenshots, there's hectic airborne action in abundance, and we're assured that "if it looks like you can blow it up, you can". And thanks to the considerable number of statistics shown at the end of every mission, there'll hopefully be every reason to retry each one until you are unfeasibly good at destruction.



↑ Spectacular action like this will keep your gaze away from the dials.



↑ Fire in the hole - and everywhere else.



↑ So much to destroy! Bring it on...



↑ One mother of a mothership.



↑ MoHo - cuddlier than Aquila.

BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA is Lost Toys' second game. The first was *MoHo*, which came out on PSOne, PC and Dreamcast. It involved rolling characters about over undulating terrain, a task made tricky thanks to the unusual inertia and the fact that the characters had a large ball where you'd expect to see legs. It was an awful game, and *Battle Engine Aquila* is easily looking far more impressive in our humble opinion.

THE DETAILS

1 This is standard radar, with distinct red and blue blobs making it easy to use in the middle of battle.

2 This gauge shows how the battle is going, and which areas each side occupies. You can see here that there's a small pocket of hapless blues surrounded by red. Oh dear.

3 This? Why, it's a massive explosion.

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Metal Gear Solid may have the monopoly on stealth-action games but the team behind *Splinter Cell* will change all that."

Reid Schneider
Senior Producer, Ubi Soft Montreal
Confidence is a good thing, we feel

"I wasn't fired with prejudice or looking for a way out because I think Microsoft is screwed with Xbox."

Seamus Blackley
Ex Xbox Technical Director, Microsoft.
There's no pause between 'out' and 'because'. Read it carefully

"The way Xbox is set up has made developing the game painless. A real breath of fresh air."

Jeremy Longley
Battle Engine Aquila maker gets a lung-full of cleansing Xbox odour.



CELEBRITY APPEARANCES AT E3

IN AN ATTEMPT to grab extra publicity at E3, several publishers pull out their wallets and book 'top' celebrities for their booths. Here's this year's crop of famous types.

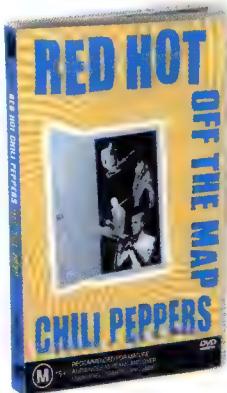
- 01 **TONY HAWK**
Skater king hanging with Activision
- 02 **MR T**
With Rage, on account of *Rocky*
- 03 **BRUCE CAMPBELL**
Evil Dead star and THQ teaming up
- 04 **ROB VAN DAM**
THQ rope in WWF superstar
- 05 **MAT HOFFMAN**
BMX bandit with Tone at Activision
- 06 **DALE EARNHARDT JR**
NASCAR cat in league with InterAct
- 07 **STACEY KIEBLER**
Another wrestler representing THQ
- 08 **RICHARD GARFIELD**
Magic: The Gathering man at Wizards
- 09 **DIGITAL NEW AGE**
Digital music tyros join Team Xbox
- 10 **TINA JORDAN**
21st Software have Miss March 2002

MUSIC DVD

4 VIDEO

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED...

RHCP
■ OFF THE MAP



■ Filmed at the Portland Memorial Coliseum on September 21, 2000, OFF THE MAP captures the RHCP scorching through renditions of songs from CALIFORNICATION the seven-times platinum album.
■ Pre-show backstage footage
■ Interview footage
■ Additional Live footage of: Skinny Sweaty Man; I Could Have Lied; Parallel Universe; Sir Psycho Sexy & Search & Destroy.
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ "...the audio transfer is of excellent quality and the extras are sufficient to almost fill another concert DVD"
DEAN MCINTOSH
<michaeldvd.com.au>
■ New CD BY THE WAY instore July.

LINKIN PARK
■ FRAT PARTY AT THE PANKAKE FESTIVAL



■ Features 6 music videos inc. Paper Cut, One Step Closer and the Australian smash hit In The End.
■ Special Features: Audio Tracks of One Step Closer, My December, High Voltage, Crawling (Bluegrass version), Crawling (live) video, Points Of Authority (live) video, additional backstage footage and Making of the In The End video.
■ Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ "...Frat Party at the Pankake Festival is an excellent disc displaying the talents of an exciting new band, paired with a technically adequate transfer, this is a must have for fans and unusual music lovers alike. The extras are excellent."
NICK JARDINE
<michaeldvd.com.au>
■ New remix CD due July.

KYLIE
■ LIVE ON SYDNEY



■ Following an explosive performance at the Sydney Olympics Kylie performed 39 sell out shows across the UK and Australia, breaking the Australian record for the most successful arena tour ever by a female artist.
■ 20 Minute Backstage Footage.
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ "This concert, captured on DVD with a great selection of audio formats, is a must have. Coupled with a good selection of extras there is nothing more a fan will need until possibly a collection of her video clips is released."

STEVE KOUKOULAS
<steve@dvd.net.au>

BEE GEES
■ LIVE BY REQUEST



■ Join over 1000 fans in an intimate and truly unique concert length performance of the Bee Gees.
■ Includes acoustic medley of a collection of past hits and songs spanning over 3 decades.
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ "This is a stunning selection of acoustic and non-acoustic tracks as well as five new classics and over a dozen all-time favourites in this unique, intimate concert captured in glorious surround sound."

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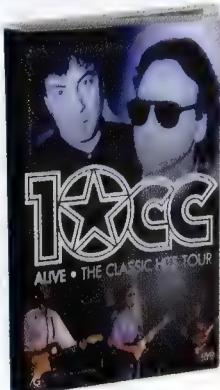
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DVD
TUTORIAL

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED...

10CC

- THE CLASSIC HITS TOUR



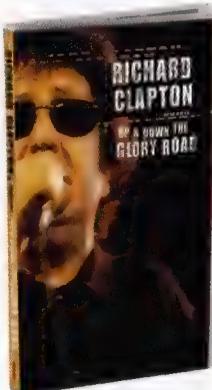
■ One of the greatest songwriting bands of our time, with hit songs spanning three decades. If you caught THE CLASSIC HITS TOUR then here's your chance to relive the experience and if you missed it, here's a great opportunity to see the legendary 10CC in action.

■ "... a skilled group of musicians with some brilliant lyrics, this is a really laid back disc to enjoy."

MICHAEL D'S REGION 4 DVD INFO PAGE <michaeldvd.com.au>

RICHARD CLAPTON

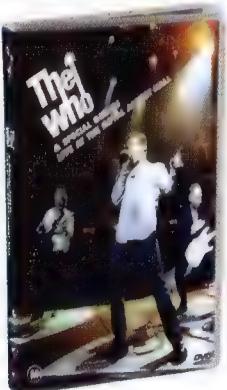
- UP & DOWN THE GLORY ROAD



■ Special guest appearances by Garry Beers, Jon Farriss & Diesel.
■ Bonus Interviews.
■ 11 classic clips.
■ DVD BONUS tracks not on cd
Solidarity / Happy Valley / Trust Somebody / Angelou.
■ Slide show [PHOTO'S].
■ Biography.
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ Debuted at No. 7 in the ARIA Music DVD Chart.
■ CD also available.
■ "We can only hope for more DVD releases such as this, from an artist who is undeniably a great and often under-lauded local talent..."
AMY FLOWER
<dvdnet.com.au>

THE WHO

- LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL



■ On November 27, 2000 The Who graciously played a concert with proceeds going to England's Teenage Cancer Trust. On stage, The Who were joined by Bryan Adams, Noel Gallagher, Kelly Jones, Nigel Kennedy, Eddie Vedder and Paul Weller. Each guest added a new dimension to a Who classic. The line-up was incredible, the atmosphere electric!
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ Special Features: Rehearsal & Backstage Footage, Documentary with Roger Daltrey Interview, Multi-Angle Sequences on Pinball Wizard.
■ "...is one essential purchase for any DVD collection."
IAN MORRIS
<michaeldvd.com.au>

DIANA KRALL

- LIVE IN PARIS



■ Recorded LIVE at the Paris Olympia 1/12/2001.
■ Best Jazz Vocal Performance Grammy - 1999s platinum selling *When I Look In Your Eyes*.
■ Bonus videos *The Look Of Love* and *Lets Face The Music & Dance*.
■ Exclusive rehearsal footage.
■ JULY tour - Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Concert Hall, Brisbane Concert Hall.
■ DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, Dolby Digital Stereo.
■ "A stunningly fresh performance with anamorphic video and DTS sound... a must buy..."
AMY FLOWER
<dvdnet.com.au>

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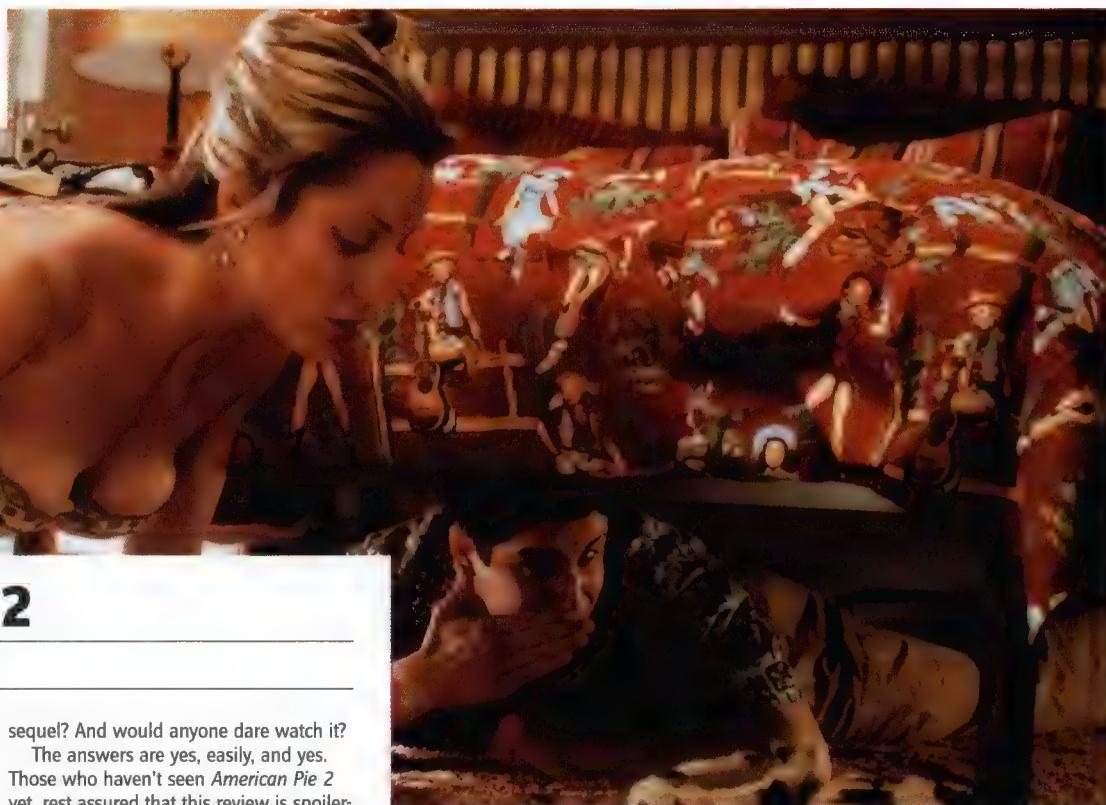


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AMERICAN PIE 2

RRP \$39.95 RATING MA15+

 EXTREME GROSS-OUTS are the new force in juvenile cinema - just look at the roaring success of *American Pie*. Really, who would have thought a decade, or even five years ago, that the ultimate movie taboo would finally be broken - pie sex. The delicate pastry outer shell, just barely concealing the chunky, fruity goodness within... in retrospect, it was only a matter of time before this most delectable of forbidden fruit became the focus of a major motion picture. The question is, are there any taboos that could possibly top that one? How could they possibly make a

sequel? And would anyone dare watch it? The answers are yes, easily, and yes. Those who haven't seen *American Pie* 2 yet, rest assured that this review is spoiler-free. There are numerous mind-bending gags holding up the film, along with excellent performances from Alyson "Willow" Hannigan, and Eugene Levy as the daggery father figure. Plus, you finally see the notorious band camp where brassy instruments are used in new and exciting ways. The disc has a decent smattering of extras, and is at the very least worth a rental for anyone who wants to see just how low Hollywood can go.



BUFFY SEASON 4

RRP \$149.95 RATING M15+

 WHO'S UP FOR some lesbianism and vampire sex? The new face of cult TV, *Buffy* is clever, sexy, violent, innovative, entertaining and enjoys wide appeal. Most people who watch it end up hopelessly addicted, hence these convenient season box sets. The Season Four set offers more than superb video

quality, with documentaries, commentaries, scripts and other goodies. Not forgetting the content itself, with some of the smartest writing on free-to-air television. Some even compare the broad and complex story arcs to Greek plays, which is a stretch, but it's a safe bet that fans that invest in this package will be well rewarded.

OCEAN'S ELEVEN

RRP \$34.95 RATING M15+

 A CRACK TEAM of impossibly cool villains, led by George Clooney and Brad Pitt, team up to rob three Las Vegas casinos simultaneously. Their impossibly contrived scheme is only revealed bit by bit as the film unfolds, hence it presents us with solid mix of tension and slapstick action. An easy-going romp,

Ocean's Eleven is unfettered by realism or unnecessary character conflict. Barring one unconvincing British accent and the redundant presence of Julia Roberts, this is an excellent excursion into the long-neglected genre of heist movies. The disc comes with two commentary tracks, 5.1 sound, and all the optional extras you would expect.





GHOST WORLD

The world is a beautiful place. Really.

THE TEENAGE ANGST FILM is a bankrupt genre these days, with the same stories being told in increasingly crass and formulaic ways. *Ghost World* dares to be different – its main characters are aimless, malevolent and pathetic. At its core are two teenage girls, Rebecca and Enid, who after leaving high school are at a bit of a loose end. Rather than start a band, or explore a haunted mansion, or any other preppy endless-summer time wasting, they respond to a personal ad as a joke. Seymour, their victim (Steve Buscemi), proves to be more than they expected, and Enid spirals into an infatuation with him.

The title is the theme of this film – hollowed out, soulless people populating drab suburbs and leading pointless lives. That doesn't mean the movie isn't



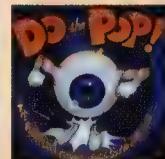
↑ "You sure about this Buscemi guy? He's just a bit... weird."

entertaining, far from it. Thora Birch (*American Beauty*) is ruthlessly caustic as Enid, the girl so utterly sick of her universe she wishes to escape it. Writer Dan Clowes gets to stick it to the people and attitudes that stink the most in our world, and you can't help but agree with him. This is not mainstream, not a blockbuster, and it's not going to gross more than *Spider-Man*. But *Ghost World* is definitely worth seeing.



DAVE SEAMAN
MELBOURNE

WORLD-CLASS DJ and producer, Dave Seaman reaps the latest crop of Victorian electronica. Local greats like Our House and Infusion stand side by side with Orbital, creating a mix ideal for any space shuttle or moonbase. The latest Global Underground collection, Melbourne is very tasty.



VARIOUS
DO THE POP

HOLDING FIFTY TRACKS, many of them ultra-rare, *Do The Pop* is an incredible collection from the golden age of Aussie pub rock. The raw sounds of The Saints and Radio Birdman started the punk rock phenomenon. Anyone into garage rock wants this collection, and wants it really bad.



SUPERHEIST
SEVEN YEARS

THIS SINGLE showcases some of the finest new talents in metal. Reminiscent of Fear Factory, but far more articulate, Superheist thrust the dark side of rock into the 21st century. These guys are touring Australia at the moment, so check the listings in your area.



IMPERIAL TEEN
ON

THIS CURIOUS QUARTET of San Franciscans are at the forefront of quirky, edgy, and very satisfying pop music. Multitalented, multi-faceted, their sounds come at you from all angles like a new flavour of ice cream. If They Might Be Giants jammed with Shonen Knife, they make a CD like *On*.

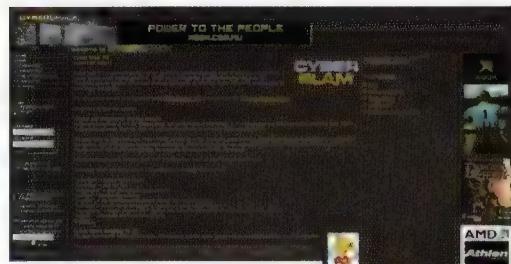


8-BIT THEATER

<http://nuklearpower.com/comic/>

THIS IS THE BLEEDING EDGE of web-based video game humour, beyond anything you may have read in Penny Arcade. Simultaneously a parody of and a homage to the RPG classics of the NES era, 8-Bit Theatre is a frequently updated portal into a whole world of blocky fun. The strip is populated by stereotypical, and strangely sympathetic characters who perpetually bash their heads against the clichés of their own game universe.

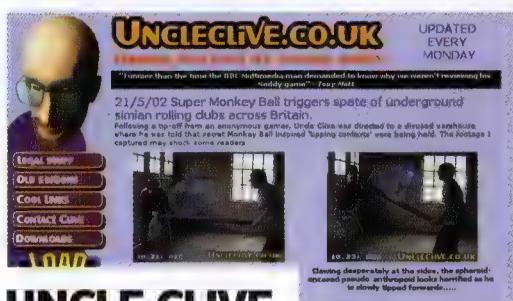
Even if you have never before touched a Final Fantasy game, the plight of Black Mage, Fighter, Thief and their friends will seem eerily familiar. This is definitely one site to add to your web comics bookmark folder.



CYBER SHACK

www.cybershack.com.au

A LOCAL RADIO TALENT with global ambitions, Charlie Brown is the founder and producer of *Cyber Shack*. A technological smorgasbord, his radio show goes out live across Australia every week. The official web portal of *Cyber Shack* can stream previously aired episodes straight to your speakers, giving you the convenience of cyber-news at any time of the day or night – not to mention the competitions, and online song requests. With a finger on the techno-pulse of the world, *Cyber Shack* is a site with equal parts utility and attitude.



UNCLE CLIVE

www.uncleclive.co.uk

NOW THAT UK RESISTANCE has bitten the big one, this is the best British video game news and parodies available. Imagine what The Onion would be like if it were all about gaming. Here is the only place you can read stories like "Nintendo Game & Watch finally released in Europe," and "Over excited Microsoft fan-boys in masturbation frenzy accident." The humour may seem niche, but it makes a lot of sense. Britain makes the world's best comedy, and Uncle Clive is on the ball with his observations on the absurd excess of today's gaming world.



CHARTS

READERS MOST WANTED



WHENEVER YOU write to us or send us an email, tell us what five future Xbox releases you're most looking forward to, in order of preference. Every month we'll reveal the games that you folks are gagging for.



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE COMMENT

GOD GAME legend Peter Molyneux still hasn't revealed specifics about his latest project (despite the new screens this issue), but it's already exciting enough for you lot to vote it as Most Wanted Xbox title. *GTA 3* and *Medal of Honor* haven't been officially announced yet, but they both feature.

1. PROJECT EGO

DEVELOPER: BIG BLUE BOX PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT RELEASE: JULY 2003

2. UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL EXTREMES PUBLISHER: INFOGRAPHICS RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2002

3. MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

DEVELOPER: 2015 PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS RELEASE: TBC

4. WWE RAW IS WAR

DEVELOPER: JAKKS PACIFIC PUBLISHER: THQ RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2002

5. GTA 3

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR PUBLISHER: TAKE 2 RELEASE: TBC

6. STEEL BATTALION

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PUBLISHER: CAPCOM RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2002

7. BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

DEVELOPER: THE COLLECTIVE PUBLISHER: EA RELEASE: JULY 2002

8. ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

DEVELOPER: BETHESDA SOFTWORKS PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT RELEASE: AUGUST 2002

9. GEOFF CRAMMOND'S GRAND PRIX 4

DEVELOPER: SIMERGY / MICROPROSE PUBLISHER: INFOGRAPHICS RELEASE: JUNE 2002

10. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS RELEASE: OCTOBER 2002

THE HOT TOPIC

The biggest Xbox topics, polyun-staturated

THIS MONTH:

What do you think of Microsoft's award package of two free games and a pad?

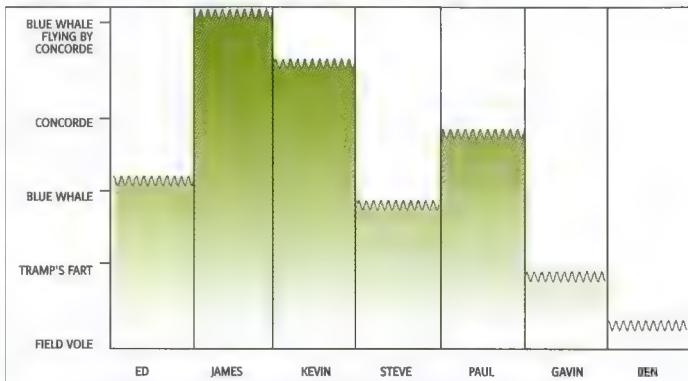


KEY (per month)

Excellent	83%
Poor	13%
What Package?	4%

SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT

Volume of team members when losing at games



XBOX GAME RELEASES

The forthcoming games you need to know about

DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PREV
MAY	NIGHTCASTER	VIR ENT.	MICROSOFT	04
	NEW LEGENDS	INFINITE MACHINE	THQ	03
	GUN VALKYRIE	SMILEBIT	SEGA	01
	ISS 2	KONAMI	KONAMI	01
JUNE	COMMANDOS 2	PYRO STUDIOS	EIDOS	01
	SSX TRICKY	EA CANADA	EA	04
	SPIDERMAN: THE MOVIE	TREYARCH	ACTIVISION	03
	HUNTER: THE RECKONING	HIGH-VOLT.	INTERPLAY	03
	GEOFF CRAMMOND'S GP 4	MICROPROSE	INTERPLAY	02
	BURNOUT	CRITERION	ACCLAIM	02
	YAGER	YAGER	THQ	02
	MOTO GP	CUMAX	THQ	02
	MIKE TYSON HW BOXING	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	01
	SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL	CIRCUS FREAK STUDIOS	INFOGRAPHICS	02
	CIRCUS MAXIMUS	KODIAK	ENCORE	04
	PRISONER OF WAR	WIDE GAMES	CODEMASTERS	04
JULY	DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER	RAGE	RAGE	04
	GUN METAL	RAGE	RAGE	03
	THE THING	COMPART.	UNIVERSAL	02
	STAR WARS JEDI: STARFIGHTER	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	02
	CHASE	IMAGINE	BAM!	02
	TAZ WANTED	BLITZ GAMES	INFOGRAPHICS	03
	BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER	THE COLLECTIVE	EA	02
AUGUST	ENCLAVE	STARBREEZE	SWING	02
	IRONSTORM	4X STUDIO	WANADO	04
	ELDER SCROLLS 3: M'WIND	BETHESDA SOFTWORKS	UBISOFT	04
	MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2	RAINBOW STUDIOS	ACTIVISION	04

DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PREV
SEPT	KENGO	LIGHTWEIGHT	UBISOFT	04
	LARGO WINCH	UBISOFT	UBISOFT	04
	ROCKY	RAGE	RAGE	04
	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON RED STORM	RED STORM	UBISOFT	02
	BALDUR'S GATE: D- ALLIANCE	SNOWBLIND	VIRGIN	04
	WHACKED	PRESTO STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	04
	RACE OF CHAMPIONS	CLIMAX	ACTIVISION	04
	STEEL BATTALION	CAPCOM	CAPCOM	02
	GALLEON	CONFOUNDING FACTOR	INTERPLAY	N/A
	CAPCOM VS SNK PRO	CAPCOM	CAPCOM	N/A
	CONFLICT: DESERT STORM	PIVOTAL	SCI	04
	WWF: RAW IS WAR	ANCHOR	THQ	N/A
OCT	COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	04
	TOCA RACE DRIVER	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	04
	LOOSE CANNON	DIGITAL ANVIL	UBISOFT	04
	TOEJAM AND EARL III	TJ&E PRODUCTIONS	SEGA	03
	VEXX	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM	04
	BRUCE LEE	RONIN ENTERTAINMENT	UNIVERSAL	03
	MIDTOWN MADNESS 3	DIGITAL ILLUSION	MICROSOFT	03
	QUANTUM REDSHIFT	CURLY MONSTERS	MICROSOFT	03
	TUROK: EVOLUTION	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM	02
	SNEAKERS	MEDIAVISION	MICROSOFT	03
	SOUL CALIBUR 2	NAMCO	NAMCO	04
	MORTAL KOMBAT	MIDWAY	MIDWAY	04
	MALICE: KAT'S TALE	ARGONAUT	VIVENDI	04
	KUNG FU CHAOS	JUST ADD MONSTERS	MICROSOFT	04
	X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION	PARADOX	ACTIVISION	04
	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	NEVERSOFT	ACTIVISION	04
	MACE GRIFFIN	WARTHOG	EA	04
	BLADE II	MUCKY FOOT	ACTIVISION	04
	CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER	HITMAKER	SEGA	03
NOV	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFOGRAPHICS	01
	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	WXP	UNIVERSAL INT.	02

inform

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN
XBOX MAGAZINE
CHART

WHEN YOU WALK away from a shop with a game in your hand, in a bag or tucked in your trousers (shame on you) an almost-invisible wire attached to the box is pulled taught. The other end is fixed to an umbrella - every time it opens, one more sale is notched up.



↑ CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX makes a welcome entry to the Top 10 list, snaking its way into the last available spot, and proving that the simple platforming formula that was once a Sony-exclusive can still appeal to all gamers across formats.

1. HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: BUNGIE

Holding off all newcomers to retain its rightful throne at the top of the pile.



2. PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS

Just missing out on the top spot, but by no means out of the running.



3. DEAD OR ALIVE 3

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: TECMO

The beautiful beat-'em-up is still going strong, despite losing its top three spot.



4. RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ILLUSIONS

This slick and highly enjoyable rally title spins out of the top five.



5. STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS DEVELOPER: LUCASARTS

A man and his light saber do some mega damage in this prequel to Episode One.



6. 2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS

Football's coming home? Well, it would appear so.



7. MAX PAYNE

PUBLISHER: TAKE TWO DEVELOPER: REMEDY ENTERTAINMENT

Feisty Max makes progress in bullet time, reloading his way into 7th place.



8. ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD INHABITANTS

Abe's third adventure slides slowly down the rankings.



9. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT

The best damned skateboarding game anywhere, period.



10. CRASH BANDICOOT: TWOC

PUBLISHER: VIVENDI DEVELOPER: UNIVERSAL

Crash jumps and spins his way into the Top 10 charts for the first time.



↑ STAR WARS: OBI-WAN is proof positive that Star Wars fans are gluttons for punishment. For a game that was originally designed for the PS One, Obi-Wan's performance these last two months have been, well, surprising. It just goes to show how persuasive a game with lightsabers in it can be.



↑ ONE OF THE FIRST Xbox games continues to be one of the strongest performers, legitimising Bizarre Creation's place as a maker of seriously good racing simulations. If you haven't got Project Gotham already then you're really missing out!

TOP FIVE BEST SELLING SINGLES OF 1990: 1) DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME - THE POLICE; 2) WOMAN IN LOVE - BARBRA STREISAND; 3) FEELS LIKE I'M IN LOVE - KELLY MARIE; 4) SUPER TROOPER - ABBA; 5) DISCO - OTTOMAN.

DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PREV	DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PREV
NOV	BRUTE FORCE	DIGITAL ANVIL	MICROSOFT	04	TBA	STATE OF EMERGENCY	VIS	TAKE 2	04
	KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER	TREYARCH	ACTIVISION	04		HOTD3	WOW	SEGA	04
	MINORITY REPORT	TREYARCH	ACTIVISION	04	TOEJAM AND EARL 3	VISUAL CONCEPTS	SEGA		03
DEC	SHAWN MURRAY'S PRO	SHABA	ACTIVISION	04	ROBOTECH	TDK INTERACTIVE	TDK INTERACTIVE		04
	STAR WARS: KOTOR	BIOWARE	ACTIVISION	02	MERCEDES BENZ	SYNETEC	TDK INTERACTIVE		04
2003	WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	GENEPOOL	ACTIVISION	04	SHREK 2	TBA	TDK INTERACTIVE		04
	COPS	FOX	VIVENDI	04	BARBARIAN	TBA	VIRGIN		04
TBA	FALCONE	POINT BLANK	VIRGIN	04	SPLINTER CELL	UBISOFT	UBISOFT		04
	SILENT HILL 2	KONAMI	KONAMI	04	RAVEN SHIELD XIII	UBISOFT	UBISOFT		04
2004	VIRTUA FIGHTER 4.1	AM2	SEGA	04	DEATHROW	SOUTHEND INTERACTIVE	UBISOFT		03
	PHANTASY STAR ONLINE	SONIC TEAM	SEGA	04	CHARLIES ANGELS	TBA	UBISOFT		04
2005	SHENMUE 2	AM2	SEGA	04	RAYMAN 3	UBISOFT	UBISOFT		04
	PANZER DRAGOON ORTA	SEGA	SEGA	04	FUTURAMA	KEMCO	SCI		04
2006	ULTIMATE BLADE OF DARKNESS REBEL ACT	CODEMASTER	04	BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW	KEMCO	KEMCO		04	
	PROJECT EGO	BIG BLUE BOX	MICROSOFT	04	COMANCHE	TBA	NOVALOGIC		04
2007	METAL GEAR SOLID X	KONAMI	KONAMI	04	ALTER ECHO	TBA	THQ		04
	GLADIUS	TBA	LUCASARTS	04	EVIL DEAD	TBA	THQ		04
2008	INDIANA JONES	THE COLLECTIVE	LUCASARTS	04	TOXIC GRIND	TBA	THQ		04
	SHAYDE	TBA	METRO 3D	04	RED FACTION 2	VOLITION	THQ		04
2009	ARMADA 2	TBA	METRO 3D	04	SERIOUS SAM	CROTEAM	TAKE 2		04
	MECH ASSAULT	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	04	STARSKY AND HUTCH	TBA	EMPIRE		04
2010	GRAVITY GAMES	MIDWAY	MIDWAY	04	BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS	EUTECHNYX	EMPIRE		04
	AGGRESSIVE INLINE	Z-AXIS	ACCLAIM	04	SMASHING DRIVE	NAMCO	NAMCO		04
2011	BALLERS	MIDWAY	MIDWAY	04	ANTZ RACING	DREAMWORKS	EMPIRE		04
	LEGION	SEVEN STUDIOS	MIDWAY	04	BLACK SKIES	IROCK INTERACTIVE	TBA		04
2012	SHINING LORE	TBA	PHANTAGRAM	04	DEUS EX 2	ION STORM	EIDOS		04
	PHANTOM CRASH	PHANTAGRAM	PHANTAGRAM	04	TIMESPLITTERS 2	FREE RADICAL	EIDOS		04
2013	DUALITY	TRILOBYTE GRAPHICS	PHANTAGRAM	04	HITMAN 2	IO INTERACTIVE	EIDOS		03
	KINGDOM UNDER FIRE 2	TBA	PHANTAGRAM	04	THIEF 3	ION STORM	EIDOS		04
2014	STRIDENT	PHANTAGRAM	PHANTAGRAM	04	LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM		04
	RESTAURANT MANAGING	TBA	PHANTAGRAM	04	TEAM SAS	RAGE	RAGE		04
2015	GTA3	ROCKSTAR GAMES	TAKE 2	04	TWIN CALIBUR	RAGE	RAGE		04
	AUSTIN POWERS	TBA	TAKE 2	04	RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN	ID/RASTER	ACTIVISION		04



LETTERS

WRITE TO US AT: Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355.
Email us at: staff@oxm.com.au. Your opinions count - we want to hear them.



LETTERS O4 EDITOR

NAME: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME OF CHOICE: *Hunter: The Reckoning*

"There's nothing better than returning from E3 to find that your next two days' work will be spent sorting through around 400 emails. Not to worry: a little Miles Davis in the background will make the time fly..."

Here's another big question: I know you people hate this topic but you must defend me. All the kids at school who I have told I owned an Xbox have been telling me "why would you get an Xbox? They're crap! You should have gotten a PS2, they're better!" So can you please just finish this off for me? Is the Xbox better than the PS2?

Corky, via email

You should simply ignore those people. Playing videogames is about stimulating our minds with interactive experiences that aren't possible in real life. If they like PlayStation 2, that's their business. If they think videogames is about some kind of perverse willy-waving contest, they're wasting their money. Xbox does the job just fine, and its hardware and software speak for themselves. It's their loss, really, if they can't see beyond the marketing hyperbole.

As for your queries, *Grand Theft Auto 3* won't be coming to Xbox; only being able to see the gun in first person shooters is the norm for the genre - try to get used to it. If you haven't already gotten *Halo*, you're really missing out on something.

As for online connectivity, the Xbox isn't designed for web browsing. Rather, the Ethernet port will be used as part of Xbox Live to facilitate online gaming. All you'll need is a high-speed connection, like cable or ADSL.

Lastly, you can't play burnt games on your Xbox, and you shouldn't, either. We know there are pirated games out there, but the problem is that they take food off the tables of the people who make these games for us. Piracy is theft, and you're only hurting yourselves in the long run. Anyone who pleads the 'legitimate back-up' line is, frankly, more than likely to be lying. So please, do the industry (and yourself) a favour and avoid that stuff. If you're not sure of a game, test it yourself. Or better yet, read our reviews - we don't lie when a game smells like dog vomit.

IS IT SEQUEL TIME ALREADY?

I'm a 14 year old who loves reading your magazines, and I love playing the wonderful Xbox I got as a present from my dad. I was very happy when I got the Xbox. I also got an extra controller, *Tony Hawk 3*, a DVD Kit and a Memory Card. Two weeks later I went out to the shops and bought *Halo* and *RalliSport Challenge*.

Two to three days later I was surfing the Internet and I decided to go to www.megagames.com. When I got there I read some interesting news about Microsoft losing money and working hard on plans to bring out an Xbox 2 by September this year. When I read this I was quite upset, and I want to know if this is true. If it is true, could you please tell us something about it?

Jonathan C



↑ "Die Smiling", "Fake never looked so real" - who ever said sex doesn't sell?



CONSOLES COMPARED.

Xbox saved me from a fate worse than death: buying a PS2! On March 26th, I figured that I could not afford an Xbox, so I decided I'd work towards getting a PS2. To that day I'd held onto my cherished Saturn, and had never bought a PS One. How could anyone not like *Sega Rally* and *Virtual Cop*? That night I observed the new Xbox at a friend's house, and after watching 30 seconds of *Wreckless*, my life was transformed. The next day, I sold my Sega, my PC games, and anything else I could find, and purchased the Xbox!

Anyway, this friend who showed me *Wreckless* has a PS One, PS2, Dreamcast, N64, GameCube and an Xbox. He has all of them hooked up via a control panel that, at a flick of a switch, can cross between consoles. All of this is pumped out via his 76cm stereo TV. My other mate can get hold of a video projector. Needless to say, we are in a very good position to compare all consoles and all games, and after comparing similar games on different consoles, I'd say Xbox wins. *Burnout*, for instance, is crystal clear compared to the PS2 version. So for those of you who are worried about graphical or power inferiority, let me put your mind at ease: you have made the right choice!

I absolutely love Jon Attaway and Steven Bailey's reviews. Jon's review of EA's *NHL 2002* in Issue 02 suited me to a "T". I think he may be my hockey soul mate. Thanks again fellas and keep up the first grade job you all doing down there.

Jon, from Queensland.

Although we like to preach the idea that it's the experience that matters and not so much the graphics, it's nice to know that irrespective, anyone with gaming experience can see that the Xbox is a markedly superior product.

I would like everyone who thinks they can get all their information off the Internet to pay close attention to Jonathan's question, because this is exactly what happens when you rely on fansites that aren't really accountable to anyone: you get rumours, inaccurate reports, even fabrications, all in the name of getting some attention. Take it from us, Australia's only credible authority for the Xbox, that the Xbox 2 rumours you've heard are complete nonsense.

A WISH TO DIE SMILING

I have been told recently of posters popping up all over Sydney, on bus stops and such, advertising the Xbox, with shots from games such as *DOA3*, featuring Lei Fang's legs and the title, "Die Smiling". Where can we pick up our own posters of the games without having to do a *Wreckless*-style smash and grab?

Chris

Shorts

Seriously, don't go smashing up bus stops for the posters. That's something only desperate Star Wars fans resort to. With any luck we will have a few posters to give away in a future issue, and if you really can't wait, you can try using your powers of persuasion (and maybe your wallet) in your local videogames retailer.

LIVE CONCERN

3 After reading Microsoft's plan for Xbox Live, where their main focus was for Europe, America and Asia, I was excited and disappointed at the same time. It made me realise what a small portion of the gaming world Australia is and with the current way broadband is set up in this country it makes me think that Microsoft probably won't even bother to set the network up in Australia. I haven't read any info about their intentions but I think I already know.

Dean

You're quite right: Australia is a relatively small market (as it's always been), but it hardly means we're being left out. Firstly, it's worth being mindful of the fact that we're part of the European market - so as far as software and product is concerned we won't be alienated in any way. Secondly, in regards to the Xbox Live infrastructure, Microsoft Australia is finalising its local plans as we speak, and you can rest assured we will be just as much a part of the Xbox Live experience as the rest of the world.

WILL SQUARE GET WITH THE PROGRAM?

Great job on the magazine!

The one thing I'm so glad about with your magazine is that you're not biased freaks! Sure, Xbox is the greatest console out there and has the best future ahead of itself, but at least you consider the competition and don't go off on any "Xbox rules and every other console is cannon fodder because Xbox will always conquer all!" rants.

The main reason I'm writing, and it's been really eating my brain inside out, is to ask you an important question: will any Final Fantasy be released on Xbox? There, asked it, phew. The Final Fantasy series has always been a



↑ Shenmue 2

NO GOOD WITH GIRLS

In the DOA3 review in Issue 01, you said that the girl featured in the sequence of shots on page 065 is Kasumi. It's not, it's Lei Fang.

Several readers
All Over The Shop.

Yes, sorry about that one. Alters. You should have seen one of the bloopers in Issue 02. My-one outside of the main review so have spotted it yet. First, Microsoft. Doh... Email us at the email address over on the top left if you've found it, under the subject heading "Send Stars Back to school." First person to find it gets a free copy of *Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex* (Deluxe mailing address in the email).

A MATURE GAMER WRITES...

Sorry for this long-winded rambling of an old gamer... but is the DVD Player any good on a normal-shaped TV screen?

M Crook
by email

DVD on Xbox works just like a normal player and is done on a non-wideformat only. All you have to check is wider to be sure if the video settings on your Xbox dashboard. If you ever intend to addressed just this the search and you'll be set.

THE SIREN CALL

I heard gunfire off to one side of the game store. I turned and saw the Xbox demo pod running *Halo*. I wanted to leave, but my legs were moving me without me telling them to. I started playing and after 60 seconds, I was loving life again. God bless Halo.

Guyver
Scotland

Excellent. Welcome to the fold. The lower back is yours.

favourite of mine and I'm sure a favourite of many other gamers out there. It would absolutely rock if it were to be released on Xbox because I know if it were, Xbox would really make it shine with its sweet hardware capabilities. I know that Square signed a contract with Nintendo, but maybe - just maybe - there will be a chance for Final Fantasy on Xbox. Anyway, thanks a bunch, and keep up the great work.

Nick

As a huge fan myself, I understand your anxiety; and sadly, from the looks of things, Final Fantasy won't be appearing on the Xbox any time soon. It's indicative of a lot of the challenges

THE SIREN CALLUMACH

Well done for *Halo*. It is the best game I have ever played in my life.

Scott Stevenson
by email

Why thank you. Although to be perfectly honest, I have had every intention to do much the same in fact. All we do is play it instead of going home on time or eating lunch.

BACK ME

DOA3 will surely beat *Soul Calibur 2* and *Virtua Fighter 4* to the crown of best beat-'em-up.

What say you?

Steven Bishop
by email

We really can't say until they're all available are known. Once considered winner is still *Virtua Fighter 4* with Wizt over everything and over you.

OBJECTION: OVERRULED

ISRF deserved at least a 9.1

Daniel Mahony
by email

James, Who reviewed the game, says he'll send you the extra 0.1 in the post, and you can do what you like with it. Give it to someone you care about it. DON'T KEEF IT.

PARTY FREAK

When are you guys going to write about all the freaky dating games from Japan? I NEED JAPANESE WACKNESS!

Beth
by email

One aspect of the Japanese market we can do with less.

TYP TIME

When's the keyboard out, and will Halo support it?

Ceri Thomas
by email

Master the keyboard, you PC wotf of a game.

Microsoft has been facing in the largely insular Japanese market. But honestly, there are many decent alternatives to *Final Fantasy* that will soon be available (*Shenmue 2*, *Morrowind*); and now that Square has taken the guts out of the series by making it online-only, it's not really that big a loss.

BIG LITTLE HANDS

I think the Controller S is a waste of time. I find the Xbox controller to perfectly fit my hands, and I have small hands. Learn to live with it, people. I for one won't be buying one!

Andrew Ludwig



↑ Star Wars: Galaxies

HMM...

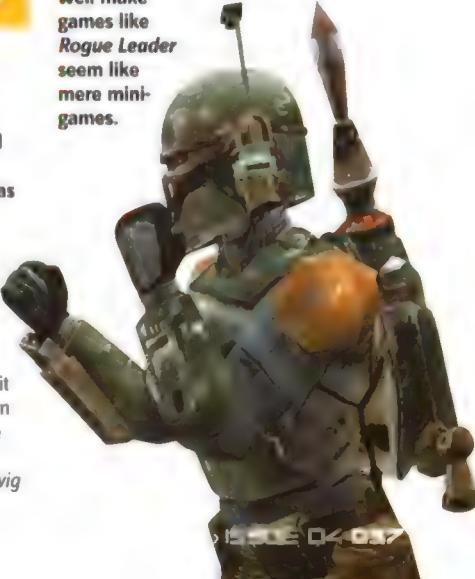
NEEDS MORE FORCE...

Like millions of other gamers, I love Star Wars. The Star

Wars games out on Xbox now are not up to the standards of games on PC, GameCube and PS2. I mean, *Obi Wan* sucked, and don't get me started with *Starfighter*. The Xbox needs the X-Wing and the Tie Fighter games which GameCube has done, as opposed to bringing out games that sucked on other systems thinking that they won't suck on Xbox (like *Starfighter*). I am looking forward to *Knights of the Old Republic* and *Star Wars: Galaxies*, but Xbox needs a good X-wing game with all the classic fighters. At least try and get *Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader* on to Xbox. It's a very good game and I don't really want to buy a GameCube, but it looks like I will have to if I don't start seeing some good Star Wars games on Xbox. *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* should be on Xbox too, as well as *Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast*, but only if they change the level designs and add a few new features to it.

Anthony Suta

Patience, young one: the 'good' Star Wars games are on their way. As any Star Wars fan should know, nearly all games based on the films have a tendency to suck - even *Rogue Leader*, which is no more than the original game with a minor facelift. Our hands-on tests of *Galaxies* and *KOTOR* were very promising, and they could very well make games like *Rogue Leader* seem like mere mini-games.



HELP TWO OODOS GET EVEN.



Oddworld has issues: Corporate greed, animal exploitation, environmental destruction...and now the last members of your species are on the menu! Play cooperatively as both Munch and his flatulent friend Abe fight the corporate clods of Oddworld and struggle to avoid extinction. The fate of Oddworld is in your hands.



xbox.com.au

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COMPS



WIN FREE STUFF!

Front row tickets to the unmissable WWE Global Warning tour are up for grabs!

BUT WAIT!
THERE'S
MORE!

Bonus extra
for readers with
a Unique
Subscriber
Number

READERS WHO
subscribed early enough
will have received a
special card with their
unique subscriber
number. Quote this
number on your entry
form, and you are
automatically in the
draw to win
one of five
copies of this
month's Game
of the Month,
Buffy the
Vampire
Slayer.

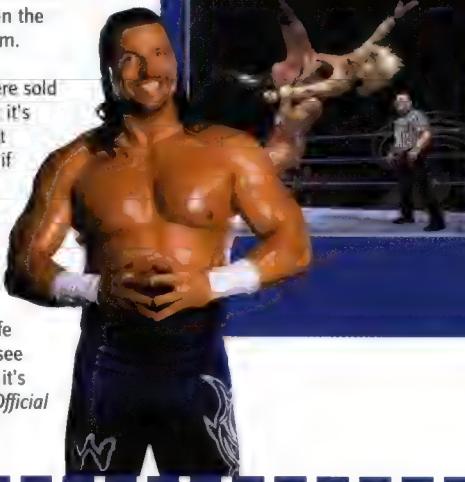
To enter,
just cut out
the form (or photocopy
or scan it), fill out the
details, correctly answer
the simple question,
and send it in to us
before July 23, 2002.

WITH THANKS to Microsoft and World Wrestling Entertainment, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* is proud to offer its readers the chance to be part of one of the most exciting sporting spectacles of the year at the WWE Global Warning Tour, held in the Melbourne Colonial Stadium.

Tickets to this hot event were sold out in under two days, and it's absolutely impossible to get your hands on tickets now if you tried. These are prizes that money just can't buy!

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Aussie WWE fans. Winners will be part of the larger-than-life action from start to finish (see right for more details), and it's only possible through the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*!

TWO LUCKY WINNERS WILL WALK AWAY WITH



- Tickets to the official press conference on Wednesday, August 7th.
- A special pass to the pre-event dinner on Friday, August 9th, where you will be dining in the presence of the wrestling superstars!
- Front row seats at the Melbourne Colonial Stadium for the WWE Global Warning event on Saturday, August 10th – and afterwards you get to keep the seat!
- Accommodation and airfares for interstate winners.

(1.) This competition is open to all residents of Australia who mail in their entries to the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* between 26th June 2002 and 23rd July 2002. Entries must be sent to *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 2022. Employees of the promoter and their immediate families, and agencies associated with this promotion are ineligible for the offer. (2.) Entries to the competition will have the chance to win only the prizes specified on the page. (3.) The promoter accepts no responsibility for late, lost or misdirected mail. (4.) All entries become the property of the Promoter. (5.) The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this offer is governed by the Privacy Notice. (6.) Winners will be notified by telephone by July 25, 2002; details will be published in Issue 06 of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. (7.) The Promoter is Derwent Howard Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 2022.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: What do the letters in 'WWE' stand for?

I HAVE A UNIQUE SUBSCRIBER NUMBER! MY NUMBER IS:

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EDGECUT 100 NEW XBOX GAMES!



ONCE A YEAR the games industry gathers together at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, or E3 for short. It's where new games are unveiled and the agenda for the industry is set for the coming year and beyond.

At E3 2002, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* bore witness to some of the most amazing game developments yet for the Xbox. Some of them we were half expecting (like *Unreal Championship*), while others were

literally sprung upon us from out of the blue. Take *Blinx*, for instance. Developed by the same people at Sega who were responsible for *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Nights*, *Blinx* is a great mascot character whose time travelling abilities are both imaginative and an example of ingenious hardware-driven game design.

Consider this as Part 1 of our E3 report. Next issue we'll report every E3 announcement including more details about games and the Xbox Live gaming service. Until then, feast your eyes on the best new 100 Xbox games from E3.

BLINX: THE TIME SWEeper

Come on, let's give him a big, warm Xbox welcome!



GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: ARTOON

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

IT'S AN ACCEPTED part of video gaming that every console needs a cuddly platform character that people can identify as the 'face' of the system. Nintendo have Mario, Sega had Sonic the Hedgehog, and PlayStation has... um... Jak and Daxter, probably.

This year at the E3 expo in Los Angeles, Microsoft are unveiling the first proper Xbox mascot, Blinx the Time Sweeper, and we've got a world exclusive first look at the character and his revolutionary game.

The development team behind *Blinx* is Artoon, a relatively new Japanese company formed by some extremely experienced game developers, many of whom have worked as part of Sega's highly respected AM divisions. Not least of these is the man responsible for designing Sonic over a decade ago, Naoto Ohshima.

As well as creating one of the most successful game characters ever, he also worked as designer and director at Sonic Team, creating and overseeing such classic games as the Mega Drive Sonic series, *Sonic CD*, *NIGHTS: Into Dreams*, and *Sonic Adventure*. Now he's bringing his unique artistic style and warped vision to Blinx.

We spoke exclusively to the producer of *Blinx*, Katsunori Yamaji - a Sega veteran himself,

having worked at developer AM2 on titles including the epic *Shenmue* - about its unusual hero and the game's warped theme.

"Blinx's occupation is Time Sweeper. His job is to manage the flow of time using his TS-1000, which may seem like a really cool job at first," Yamaji told us. "But actually he's just a normal blue collar worker, and not a hero who everyone looks to when they're in trouble."

Using his trusty TS-1000 (basically a vacuum cleaner that can suck up practically anything in the game), Blinx has to collect coloured time crystals to power up his Time Sweeper. Depending on how many of each kind of crystal he collects, he can then warp time around himself.

"The time control feature provides users a brand new gaming experience - this is what I'm most proud of," Yamaji explained. "Common controls you see on a VCR [eg. rewind, pause, fast forward] are available for players to use at any moment during gameplay.

"This enables totally new gameplay mechanics that no one has ever thought of before, and are only possible because of the hardware capabilities of Xbox."

So, for example, at one point you reach a cave that you want to go into but its entrance is blocked by monsters. If you've collected enough of the right crystals you could choose to temporarily record the action, then run in front of the monsters to lure them away from the cave entrance.



↑ Look at him grinning like a Cheshire cat. He loves his job, you know.



↑ Collect the coloured shapes to warp time.



↑ When you fast forward, things go all red.

BONUS INFO

>> NIGHT AND DAY

Blinx is set in a world called, bizarrely, BI964. The first stage of the game is in the style of an old European town, but certain things are quite different from what we're used to. "Day and night has been twisted around in a weird balance, which creates an extraordinary world. It might look like night time when you look around the stage, but when you look up, the sun is still just about to set, with the moon also visible," Yamaji told us.

Totally new gameplay mechanics are only possible because of Xbox™

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

DEVELOPER:

NEVERSOFT

PUBLISHER:

ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

Shaping up to be a great improvement over the already great *THPS3*, with hub-like levels, bonus games, and lots of variety.

THE THING

DEVELOPER:

COMP. ARTWORKS

PUBLISHER:

VIVENDI

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

Based on the film,

this is like *Resident Evil* with a twist - you need to keep your team from going insane and killing you. It's going to be very tense.

MINORITY REPORT

DEVELOPER:

TREYARCH

PUBLISHER:

ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

This is the game of the new Spielberg film starring Tom Cruise, and is being developed by the capable chaps that did *Spider-Man*.

(Issue 03 page 058)

STARSKY AND HUTCH

DEVELOPER:

EMPIRE

INTERACTIVE

PUBLISHER:

EMPIRE

INTERACTIVE

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

The fondly remembered 70s cop show skids onto Xbox, replete with authentic red Gran Torino car. Huggy Bear is bound to turn up somewhere.

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT
DEVELOPER:
2015

PUBLISHING

EA

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

The PC contingent went nuts for this FPS earlier this year, so we're looking forward to giving it a go on Xbox. The scary beach storm sequence looks ace.

ANTZ RACING

DEVELOPER:

DREAMWORKS

PUBLISHER:

EMPIRE

INTERACTIVE

RELEASE DATE:

AUGUST 2002

A racing game in the *Mario Kart* mould, starring all the

characters from the CGI film of a few years back. What does Woody Allen make of it all?

BRUCE LEE: QUEST OF THE DRAGON

DEVELOPER:

UNIVERSAL

STUDIOS

PUBLISHER:

VIVENDI

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

Hundreds of asses to kick and nearly as many moves to do with, in this free-roaming beat-'em-up starring everyone's favourite dead martial artist.



↑ You're in the *Minority* there. (PS2 shot).



↑ Two goons from *Medal Of Honor* (PC shot).

SKETCHY DETAILS

NOT MUCH IS known about the enemies that Blinx will face, but what we do know for sure is that they're bursting with warped weirdness of the kind Ohshima is famed for.



↑ That's one uncomfortable-looking space hopper.



↑ Shoot junk at the bogey monsters.



↑ An inflated boss-eyed flying octopus, of course.



↑ Blinx's face is fully animated.



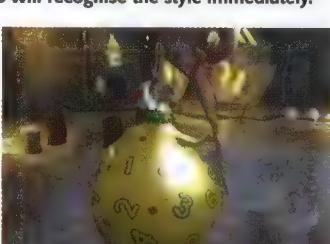
↑ Fans of NiGHTS will recognise the style immediately.



↑ Check out the twisted background style.



↑ This blobby fellow's got a clock on his stick...



↑ Use the VCR controls to warp time.



BONUS INFO

TIME BANDITS

The weird creatures we've seen so far won't be the only baddies Blinx will have to watch out for. "There are many enemy characters, and there's also a mysterious group of bandits," said Yamaji. We'll let you know more about these enemy guys in the coming months.



↑ Why, it's Yager. Fly! Fly, my pretty...



↑ Onimusha 2: has pointy sticks (PS2 shot)

TOXIC GRIND

DEVELOPER:

THQ

PUBLISHER:

THQ

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

A BMX game with a storyline, bringing back painful memories of *Dark Summit*. But the premise is decent - a race against time, thanks to the deadly poison in your veins.

RED FACTION 2

DEVELOPER:

VOLITION

PUBLISHER:

THQ

RELEASE DATE:

Like to be armed to the hilt in a free-roaming flying game? This is for you. The level of detail on the titanic

NOVEMBER 2002

Red Faction's claim to fame is the Geomod technology that lets players blast holes in walls - and there'll be plenty of it in this FPS sequel.

YAGER

DEVELOPER:

YAGER

DEVELOPMENT

PUBLISHER:

THQ

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

Like to be armed to the hilt in a free-roaming flying game? This is for you. The level of detail on the titanic

ships is awesome. They have lasers.

SERIOUS SAM

DEVELOPER:

CROTEAM

PUBLISHER:

TAKE 2

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

Remember the Library in *Halo*? In *Serious Sam*, the quieter moments are a bit like that. This is one hectic FPS with loads of monsters.

ONIMUSHWA 2

DEVELOPER:

CAPCOM

PUBLISHER:

CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

Gemina Onimusha

didn't exactly blow our socks off, but expect Capcom to make a bit more use of Xbox when they follow it with a more-of-the-same samurai adventure.

FUTURAMA

DEVELOPER:

DIGITAL ILLUSIONS

PUBLISHER:

SCI

RELEASE DATE:

FEBRUARY 2003

We're hoping this'll do its licence more justice than the average *Simpsons* game. Developed by the RalliSport

Challenge boys, like *Battlefield: 1942*, so it's got a chance.

THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

DEVELOPER:

BETHESDA

SOFTWORKS

PUBLISHER:

UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE:

JUNE 2002

Tick off the box marked 'incredibly deep first-person RPG'. It's already doing the rounds on PC, and word has it that even newcomers to the RPG genre are loving it. Definitely one to look out for.

100 BEST NEW XBOX GAMES



MEET BLINX'S DAD

NAOTO OHSHIMA, the man behind Blinx, was responsible for designing Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog in 1990 along with the head of Sonic Team, Yuji Naka. He also designed amazing characters such as NiGHTS (flying purple dream creature from Sonic Team's cult follow-up to *Sonic*) and the Burning Rangers (future-cool fire-fighting gang from the Saturn game of the same name).

On top of that, he's directed games including *Sonic CD* (a pet project of Ohshima's which, like *Blinx*, featured time-travelling gameplay), *NiGHTS: Into Dreams*, *Christmas NiGHTS* and *Burning Rangers*, and also oversaw the excellent movie sequences in the Dreamcast game *Sonic Adventure*.

Ohshima left Sonic Team in 1999 to form Artoon.



↑ Blinx can swim even though he's a cat.

"With around 40 levels, we could be looking at a huge adventure"

» Then you could rewind what you've just done, effectively going back in time and doing the section again, only this time with the original version of yourself helpfully luring the monsters away from the cave entrance for you! It means you're effectively playing co-operatively with yourself.

Other time controls will allow you to speed up the action, slow things down to make it easier to avoid enemies and rewind the level at any time. Naturally, all this warping of time and changing of the past, present and future is only possible thanks to the Xbox hard drive.

Blinx's TS-1000 also works as his weapon, as it can suck up and store pieces of scenery and junk from around the levels and then fire them at enemies. A very handy function it is too.

Upgrades will be available for the Time Sweeper, with more powerful machines being able to hold more - and bigger - pieces of junk,

and even move scenery to reveal extra sections of levels. With around 40 levels planned, we could be looking at a very big adventure indeed.

But as producer Yamaji says, "there are still many secrets which haven't yet been unveiled." And even though what we've seen so far is oozing the kind of character and inventive originality shown in previous games by members of the Artoon team, we've only lightly pawed at the surface of *Blinx: The Time Sweeper*.

Look forward to lots more exclusive coverage in *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* in the near future. Unless you've collected enough time crystals for your TS-1000 and want to fast forward, that is.

BONUS INFO

TWO BLINX

Although it's not definite yet, *Blinx* will most likely be a one-player game only. "If multiple Time Sweepers start to control time together, a time paradox will most likely occur!" Producer Katsunori Yamaji explained cheekily.

JUMP MAPPING

As *Blinx* is a cat, he's particularly good at leaping around. He can jump particularly high in the air, and is also able to jump down from high places and still land on his feet. Expect plenty of platforms to test these skills to the max.



↑ Wood you like *Unreal Championship*?



↑ Rayman 3 features beefeaters, surprisingly.

TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE

DEVELOPER: PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAAMES

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

Set before the fantastic films, this game features the epic battle between Skynet and humanity. No doubt there'll be plenty of firepower...

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

DEVELOPER: INFOGRAAMES

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAAMES

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

Anger leads to hatred... or alternatively, you could just go karting. The tight handling of karts is ideally

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

The stinking loaf that was the N64 *M:I* should be well and truly banished to history with this mix of gadgetry and espionage.

FURIOUS KARTING

DEVELOPER: INFOGRAAMES

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAAMES

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

It's not all multiplayer in the world of FPS, you know. *Unreal 2* is a single-player skirmish through incredibly lush environments.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

DEVELOPER: INFOGRAAMES

suited to games, so we're looking forward to this.

UNREAL 2

DEVELOPER: EPIC GAMES

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAAMES

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

The limbless platform star is back after two highly successful games. Lovely 3D cartoon landscapes should be the order of the day here.

UBI SOFT

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

The limbless platform star is back after two highly successful games. Lovely 3D cartoon landscapes should be the order of the day here.

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL EXTREMES

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAAMES

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

Possibly the most eagerly awaited game in the office, this could finally - finally - knock *Halo* off the top spot as our lunchtime game of choice.

CHARLIE'S ANGELS

DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

Nice legs and plenty of fights mean that this should be an authentic experience for lovers of Charlie's crime-fighting ladies. No solid information available at present.

PANZER DRAGOON



↑ It's looking dark, moody and brilliant.



↑ What's she running from?



↑ Y....M....unghh..C...rar...A!



↑ He's not going to axe for directions..



↑ Operation Flashpoint (PC shot).



↑ A social leporid in Black & White (PC).

THE MATRIX RELOADED

DEVELOPER: SHINY

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAPHICS

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002
Barring a glitch in the Matrix itself, we'll be playing the game of the movie's sequel later this year. Expect mucho bullet time.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

DEVELOPER: EA SEATTLE

PUBLISHER: EA

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002
Not only does this update the brilliant original *OF* military shoot-'em-up, it also

Saddle up once again, space cowboy

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: SMILEBIT

PUBLISHER: SEGA

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

AN UPDATE of Team Andromeda's classic boy-meets-dragon tale has been the darling of many most wanted lists since the third instalment, *Panzer Dragoon Saga* became a much-loved, and much sought after rarity on Sega Saturn.

Details of the *Panzer Dragoon Orta* are limited mostly to net rumour and guesswork, but after testing it at E3, we know at least this: it will be based on the shoot-'em-up action of the first two games, and not the RPG-style of the third.

We can fill in the gaps with our own *Panzer*-heavy knowledge and the selection of succulent screenshots you see here. Expect heart-stopping bosses, spectacular scenery, epic battles filled with rainbows of glorious action, a grand



↑ Your dragon's homing missiles in effect.

orchestral soundtrack and a sprinkle of emotion as you form a constantly evolving bond with your winged companion.

All these things come as *Panzer* standard, but it's hoped that the Xbox instalment, under the guiding hand of *JSRF* creators Smilebit, will take them to a brand new level for fans and freshers alike.



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3



Those zombies just keep on a-comin'

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: WOW ENTERTAINMENT

PUBLISHER: SEGA

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

HEAD SHOT. It's still the quickest, cleanest and most satisfying way to take down a rotting shambler intent on feeding from your lifeforce. That will never change, because it's so right.

Similarly, we'd be mad to expect *HOTD3* to change its winning formula of intense, twitchy light gun-based cadaver carnage. You'll be blowing holes in hordes of lumbering undead as they shuffle like Hell's own pensioners through

your field of vision, while you pause only to rescue anything with a pulse in return for rewards such as power-ups, point bonuses and big hugs. Well, the first two, anyway.

While previous games were entirely pistol-based (apart from the Dreamcast version, which featured a machine gun), *HOTD3* will give you a bonus shotgun to transform the action into a fine red mist of brains and teeth.

There'll also be plenty more alternative routes and multiple endings to stave off that game-on-rails feel and no doubt that perennial *HOTD* baddie Magician will rear his near-invincible head during proceedings.

Don't be surprised if this comes packaged with a super Sega light gun.



DEVELOPER: KEMCO
PUBLISHER: KEMCO

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002
Taking its cue from the comics rather than the films, TV show or cartoons, this should be both a darker Bat world and lord it over *Batman: Vengeance*.

DEVELOPER: CIRCUS FREAK STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAPHICS

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002
We previewed this tasty looking, Xbox-only superhero romp last ish. The whole of Metropolis is yours in which to be super.

DEVELOPER: BOHEMIA INT. STUDIO
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002
Massively hyped and delayed on PC, *B&W* divided gamer's opinions like no other game. The Xbox version is being completely reworked, and may well convert a few of the haters.

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002
Exclusive to Xbox, and intriguingly



↑ Facial details are stunning and, hopefully, almost as unique as you are.

PROJECT EGO

The world is not enough? This one might be

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: BIG BLUE BOX

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE: JULY 2003

GOOD RPGS create absorbing worlds that suck players in for weeks at a time, and spit them back into real life slicked down with a sticky film of gooey gaming satisfaction. It's taken as gospel that the character you play is one already decided for you (a renegade, a thief, a prince) and that you'll just act out the motions and prompt the next cut-scene.

But imagine a game where your character is as individual as you are. That's what *Project Ego* is trying to do for you. It offers an incredible amount of scope within its rich game world, both

in terms of your character's actions and look. Your appearance isn't something that you determine by ploughing through menus at the beginning of the game. Instead, it's a genuine reflection of how you choose to play.

Spend time training hard or straining through gruelling physical labour and you'll develop a body rippling with muscles. Conversely, lazing about in a pub will win you friends but turn you into a bit of a bloater. Choose to wear clothes that best compliment your cool battle scars - add a tattoo if you like - but chose something that retains your dignity as you age.

Essentially, your body will become your journal, and experience is something more than just a statistic totting up after every battle. There is no good and evil, and it's up to you what moral shade of grey you choose to adopt between black and white.



BONUS INFO

BABY BIO

Project Ego is the first title to be produced by Big Blue Box. Its founders, Dene and Simon Carter, worked on renowned PC titles like *Dungeon Keeper* and *Magic Carpet*. Big Blue Box is a satellite of Lionhead, the company bringing *Black and White* to Xbox. This means that despite being a fledgling developer, Big Blue Box can depend on Lionhead for support when it comes PR and game-testing.

LIGHT FANTASTIC

Another factor to affect the appearance of your character is the amount of sunshine he soaks up throughout his travels. Indulging in plenty of day-dodging nocturnal activities will result in a gaunt, gothic and pasty complexion, while strolling through the daytime rays will produce a healthy, bronzed tan. It will also be able to tell the time using a sundial, thanks to the passage of day and night.



↑ Sunny day, heavy armour. He'll get a rash.



↑ Synchronise sundials, everyone.



↑ There's a BBC Costume Drama Cam, too.



↑ X-Men: Next Dimension (GameCube shot).



↑ Mat Hoffman wheelies in his sequel.

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

DEVELOPER:

ID/RASTER

PUBLISHER:

ACCLAIM

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

This was a big hit on PC last Christmas, and by the time it hits Xbox, shooting Nazis from the first person will never have looked so good.

TUROK EVOLUTION

DEVELOPER:

ACCLAIM AUSTIN

PUBLISHER:

ACCLAIM

RELEASE DATE:

MARCH 2003

Supremely speedy deathmatching is assured as the game that established online gaming for the PC is back. Will

OCTOBER 2002

Taking the dino-hunting FPS into new territory. We've played it quite a bit, and the final product should be a right Jurassic lark. Sorry about that...

QUAKE IV

DEVELOPER:

RAVEN

PUBLISHER:

SOFTWARE/ID

PUBLISHER:

ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

A sprawling platformer from the same mould as *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Jak and Daxter* will be more than welcome on Xbox.

DOOM III

DEVELOPER:

ID

it do the same for Xbox? Will it come anywhere near *Halo*? Big things are expected of this.

VEXX

DEVELOPER:

ACCLAIM AUSTIN

PUBLISHER:

ACCLAIM

RELEASE DATE:

AUGUST 2002

A sprawling platformer from the same mould as *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Jak and Daxter* will be more than welcome on Xbox.

DOOM III

DEVELOPER:

ID

The best BMX series

PUBLISHER:

ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

Marking id's return to both the series that made them seriously famous and to single-player gaming, *Doom III* should be as frantic as a game is legally allowed to be.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

DEVELOPER:

ACTIVISION

PUBLISHER:

ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE:

AUGUST 2002

Pitting the X-Men against each other in a 3D fighter with *Soul Calibur*-style eight way movement should make for inventive combat.

BUFFY ROCKS THE UNDERWORLD!



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Buffy
the vampire slayer™

BRUTE FORCE

Long-awaited shooter approaches final stretch

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ANVIL

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

IT GOES a little something like this - you head up a crack squad of combat specialists out to neutralise an alien threat looming across an entire solar system. Hence *Brute Force*.

As head of an elite quartet, you're sent on all Confed's toughest missions. It's up to you to tailor your team for any situation. You're in charge of three other hard-arsed storm troopers, each with a unique set of skills and likes/dislikes. For example, there's the obligatory stealth expert, a human female by the name of Hawk. She's primarily a scout and moves silently, leaving no

footprints. Provided she stays out of direct line of enemy vision, she's effectively invisible and can perform silent kills with her short blade.

It's possible to delegate tasks and give orders to your team, and then flit between characters at the touch of the d-pad. Order Flint, the sniper, to keep her distance, and she can use her ability to aim over great distances to lay down cover fire for the team as they storm an installation.

Sadly, this doesn't support online or System Link play, but it does feature a brilliant and seamless multiplayer option. Up to three other players can pick up a pad at any time during play, tap the start button, and the screen will split accordingly to let them dive straight in. They can exit in a similarly unobtrusive fashion, too. This game is repeatedly mentioned in the same breath as *Halo*. Will it come close? See for yourself how things are shaping up in our Exclusive Access feature on page 062.



↑ The Brute Force team in all their melodramatic glory. Who will you be today?

BONUS INFO

>> PEOPLE SKILLS

The other members of your team are:

1. Tex, Assault Trooper. A muscle-headed heavy weapons geek, prone to berserk outbursts of double hand-cannon artillery during firefights. Can also shove his way through barriers and doors.

2. Brutus, Shock Trooper. From the Feral race of highly religious lizard lookalikes. Carries a unique weapon known as the Feral Cutter, can perform a brutal charging attack and is afraid to enter certain enemy installations due to his superstitions.

3. Flint, Sniper Trooper. Self-explanatory. She's also part-cyborg, allowing her to travel through areas of toxic fumes or low oxygen.

>> HOST'S PLANETS

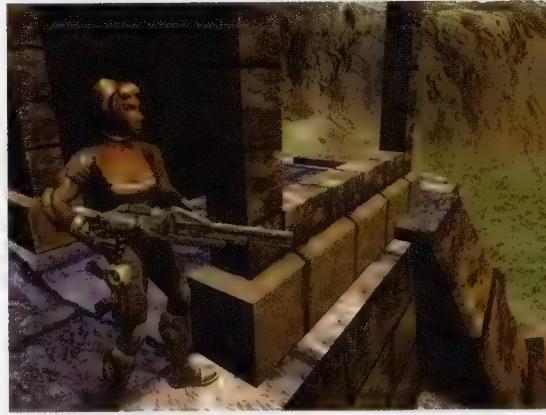
Brute Force takes the player across four primary planets and other lesser locations. Caspian has Earth-like natural environments; Brutus's homeland Ferix has dense foliage and giant trees. There are also standard cold and hot locales, such as volcanic planet Singe and aqua world Estuary. You'll also need to traverse the mysterious world of Shadoon and The Wastes, a barren asteroid field on the outer fringe of the known solar system.



↑ Call the team in, if you're having real trouble.



↑ How do you plan to get to the middle?



↑ Taking cover should give you a tactical edge.

XIII

DEVELOPER:

UBI SOFT

PUBLISHER:

UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

Based on a Belgian comic, this is a cel-shaded FPS. It's maturing nicely - a distinctive look and online play makes this one to watch.

THIEF 3

DEVELOPER:

ION STORM

PUBLISHER:

EIDOS

RELEASE DATE:

MARCH 2003

Near-legendary among PC gamers,

this first-person mediaeval sneak-'em-up is stealthy enough to creep up behind Solid Snake and pinch his bum.

DEATHROW

DEVELOPER:

SOUTHEND

INTERACTIVE

PUBLISHER:

UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

A deadly hitman - i.e. you - is forced back into action with more than 20 missions of globe-trotting assassination to handle.

HITMAN 2

DEVELOPER:

IO INTERACTIVE

PUBLISHER:

EIDOS

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

A deadly hitman - i.e. you - is forced back into action with more than 20 missions of globe-trotting assassination to handle.

TOEJAM & EARL III: ALL FUNKED UP

DEVELOPER:

VISUAL CONCEPTS/

TJ&E PRODS.

PUBLISHER:

SEGA

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

This future sport involves violence and frisbees, thus satisfying two primary human needs. We had a peek last month in Issue 03 and it's coming along fine.

NOVEMBER 2002

Sega's first self-consciously 'cool'

game since *JSRF*

rewards the Mega

Drive faithful with a

third comedy

adventure. The most left-field release of the year? Oh yes.

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

DEVELOPER:

THE COLLECTIVE

PUBLISHER:

LUCASARTS

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

The presence of the word 'tomb'

indicates that Indy will soon be whipping Lara in the world of games as well as films. From the makers of the *Buffy* adventure.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

DEVELOPER:

FREE RADICAL

DESIGN

PUBLISHER:

EIDOS

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

This sequel to one of the two decent PS2 launch games is set to provide plenty of historically-themed deathmatch action and a beefed-up single player mode.



↑ Two TimeSplitters from *TimeSplitters 2*.



↑ *ToeJam & Earl III* - can't wait for this...



xbox.com.au



↑ This must be the bit where the prison guard notices you're missing.

DEUS EX II: INVISIBLE WAR

Futuristic RPG shooter makes its long awaited return

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: EIDOS
PUBLISHER: ION STORM
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002

THE ORIGINAL *DEUS EX* scooped a BAFTA award for PC Game of the Year after it stormed the charts two years ago. It was recognised for its perfect balance of RPG elements with superb first-person shooter gameplay.

Each play through of the game rewarded the player with markedly different experiences. Every decision the player made had very real repercussions on what happened in the game. Acclaimed Producer Warren Spector and his team have spent the last two years pushing the concept further and focusing on giving the player

more freedom than ever while at the same time immersing them in a dark conspiracy riddled with clever plot twists.

From start to finish, *Deus Ex II* is far more open-ended than other games of its type. The likes of *Final Fantasy*, *Half-Life*, and *Metal Gear Solid* are very linear and filled with scripted moments. *DE II* has been built so that two people playing the game can have completely different experiences.

Players won't run into contrived, unrealistic puzzles. Instead you'll encounter problems and how you solve them is entirely up to you. Throughout the story, NPCs react to you based upon how you've acted. If you sneak your way through the action, some characters will applaud your non-violent approach. If you choose the route of all evil, responses will be very different.

You have been warned...

BONUS INFO

BOSS BOSSES

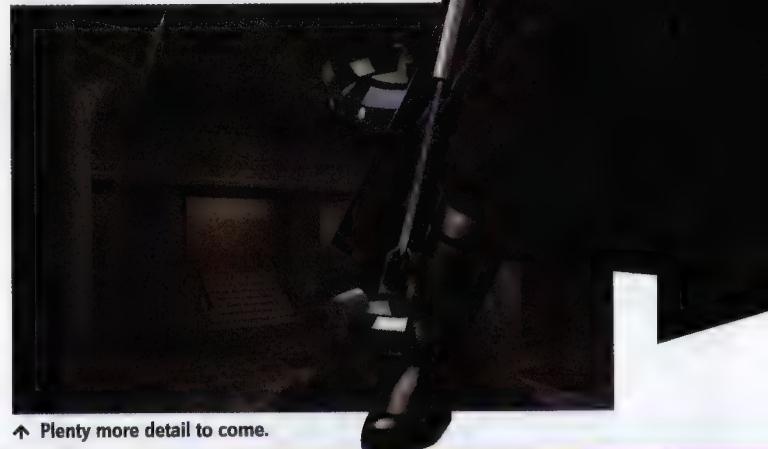
Every area of the game is packed with clever touches and as enemies go, *DE II* is again ahead of the pack. For example, the game features deadly fish that won't attack if you're at 100 per cent health, but if you're bleeding, the fish will pick up on it and finish you off.



↑ Never, ever go into the light...



↑ The stairs look good but where's the lift?



↑ Plenty more detail to come.



↑ Avenge your Dad in *Shenmue II* (DC shot).



↑ *Battlefield: 1942* looks special (PC shot).

SHENMUE 2

DEVELOPER: AM2
PUBLISHER: SEGA/INFOGRAAMES
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002
The Dreamcast version of this unique adventure still stands as a gobsmacking achievement. In the sequel, an incredibly detailed recreation of Hong Kong is yours for the exploring.

BATTLEFIELD: 1942
DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ILLUSIONS

PUBLISHER:

EA
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2002
The *RallySport* boys turn their skilful hands to World War II. Take part in the biggest battles of the conflict in a fraught, *Operation Flashpoint* style. Top stuff.

METAL GEAR SOLID X

DEVELOPER: KONAMI
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002
You might have heard of this game already. Wonder if it

will cut the Xbox mustard? With a deadly blade, we humbly suggest...

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

DEVELOPER: BIOWARE
PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002
We're really looking forward to this olde *Star Wars* worlde RPG - check out our scoop in Issue 02 to see why.

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK

DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

ALLIANCE

DEVELOPER: BIOWARE
PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002
The PS2 edition went down a storm last Christmas, but Xbox will get the best version of this great action RPG.

CRIMSON SKIES: HIGH ROAD TO REVENGE

DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002
Team up with three other players to deal death in a zombie-infested town. Nasty weapons like chainsaws up the destruction factor.

Fly through 1930s America and shoot things. You can manipulate the environment too - triggering landslides sounds like top fun.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002
Team up with three other players to deal death in a zombie-infested town. Nasty weapons like chainsaws up the destruction factor.

COLIN MCRAE 3



↑ Ford Focus goes from strength to strength.

The ultimate dirt track racer returns

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS

PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

THE HIGHLY anticipated third title in the stunning *Colin McRae* series is edging towards release. Codemasters has begun the roll out of information on the only game with a sufficiently impressive pedigree to topple *RalliSport Challenge* from its current first place on the dirt track podium.

"We're centering on the player becoming McRae; it's about getting the tension and atmosphere of the championships across," producer Guy Wilday told us. "Previous *McRae* titles were all about the cars and the tracks. This is all about personal involvement, which no one's achieved previously in a racing game."

This means that there won't be several



↑ Mind that skid! Especially on the snow.

different racing modes, but rather a more (Ford) focused single-player goal. "We're not overly concerned with game modes, we're aiming for a very personal experience. It's more important for the player to feel passionately about winning the championships not just the excitement of being a car in different racing modes."



↑ VTs come to life at night.



↑ Level cities in seconds.

STEEL BATTALION



Mech war, not love in a Vertical Tank

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

SHINJI MIKAMI, creator of *Resident Evil* and *Devil May Cry* series, is behind this truly ambitious title. After researching Xbox, Mikami wanted to create something innovative that could only be possible on Microsoft's console.

The result is a game with unparalleled visuals and a 40-button controller guaranteed to make your head spin. Stomping mech action takes place in the future on a Pacific island,

where the government has taken to harsh military dictatorship. Fed up with early curfews and no drinking, you hop into a Vertical Tank and set out to lead the rebellion against the evil overlords and their lording over everything.

Set over ten levels and played from a first-person perspective, the complex HUD system requires you to learn every aspect of a VT's movement. Heavy focus will be placed on balancing your mech in an upright position, as once you've toppled over it'll be virtually impossible to get up again.

And as you take damage from enemy mechs, tanks, planes and foot soldiers, some of your VT's functions will begin to degrade until they're useless. Bit harsh...



↑ Even the HUD has us scratching our heads.



↑ Work up a sweat in *Kakuto Chojin*.



↑ *Midtown Madness 3*. But you knew that.

KAKUTO CHOJIN

DEVELOPER:

DREAM PUBLISHING

PUBLISHER:

MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

Gritty fighting, with all the latest graphical jiggery-pokery poured over it like sweet, sweet custard. Think *Fight Club* meets *Wreckless* in a gritty beat-'em-up fashion

KUNG FU CHAOS

DEVELOPER:

JUST ADD MONSTERS

PUBLISHER:

MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

The four-player chop socky face-slappage in a variety of lampooned movie sets in this game sounds like a top laugh, and reminds us a little bit of the classic *Power Stone*.

MAXIMUM CHASE

DEVELOPER:

GENKI

PUBLISHER:

MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

Some games let you drive. Some let you

shoot. And some - like this one, for example - let you do both. Super.

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

DEVELOPER:

CURLY MONSTERS

PUBLISHER:

MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

Wipeout in all but name, by the chaps who made the original (and best) two games in that landmark futuristic driving series.

MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

DEVELOPER:

NAMCO

RELEASE DATE:

AUGUST 2002

This rodent-heavy puzzler made the

Japanese launch of Xbox. Creep through a massive house and capture the territory for your mouse-gang. Okay... it sounds like one for the nippies. And probably is.

DEAD TO RIGHTS

DEVELOPER:

NAMCO USA

PUBLISHER:

NAMCO

RELEASE DATE:

DECEMBER 2002

A new take on *Max Payne* - John Woo your way through levels armed only with a huge arsenal of guns. Lock on.



↑ Look at those real-time double red lines.



↑ Struck by lightning?



↑ Standing on troops rocks!



↑ Fact: Mechs are harder than choppers.



↑ Defender of the Earth - where's Mandrake?



↑ Mad, crazy acrobatics in Freaky Flyers.

DEFENDER

DEVELOPER:
7 STUDIOS
PUBLISHER:
MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE:
SEPTEMBER 2002

The ancient coin-op original is fondly remembered, and now Midway is bolting a third dimension onto its intense blaster.

FREAKY FLYERS

DEVELOPER:
MIDWAY
PUBLISHER:
MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE:
OCTOBER 2002

A story-based racing

Racing sim gets that special Sega touch**GAME INFORMATION**

DEVELOPER: SEGA
PUBLISHER: SEGA
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

ALTHOUGH THE original Dreamcast *Sega GT* title failed to light many fires, that hasn't stopped Sega going back to the drawing board in search of the definitive racing simulation.

Sega GT 2002 features over one hundred of the current and classic high performance cars we'd all love to drive. Each one will display the exact handling and performance specifics of their real-life counterparts, and you just know that they've been sticking microphones where the sun don't shine to capture authentic acoustics.

Four modes form the backbone of the game. Chronicle Mode lets players drive muscle cars from the 70s and 80s, while the Quick Battle



↑ Sega Rally style physics not included...

option serves up head-to-head, split-screen racing. Time Attack - get this - lets you race as fast as you can to grab the fastest lap.

Then there's the more challenging Original Mode. Here you race for cash to buy new cars or upgrade existing ones and then show them off in your very own Virtual Garage.

**MECHASSAULT****Heavy mech shooter leads online charge****GAME INFORMATION**

DEVELOPER: DAY 1 STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

MECHASSAULT SIGNALS the first console game from Microsoft's popular *BattleTech* series on the PC. The title is currently tipped to be Microsoft's first online Xbox game, featuring a variety of matchmaking services, team play and voice commander support.

The futuristic third-person shooter puts you at the helm of a huge walking BattleMech armed right up to its high-impact titanium teeth. Unlike Capcom's *Steel Battalion* (see page 051) the

emphasis here is on arcade action and not the kind of complex simulation that requires a 40-button controller, but hey, each to their own.

Action follows a mission-based structure where you'll have to plough your way through enemy lines completing several objectives.

These range from taking out enemy structures such as buildings and bridges to completely wiping out every red dot on your radar. And we're pleased to say that it all looks very impressive.

Everything in the game world can be (and should be, because it's bloody good fun) destroyed bit by bit. Launch your first wave of missiles at a skyscraper and then watch half the building cave in before finishing it off with a second wave. Heaven...



game, *Freaky Flyers* is a bit like *Mad Dash Racing* in planes. Branching circuits promise lots of different routes while you race.

GRAVITY GAMES: STREET. VERT. DIRT.

DEVELOPER:
MIDWAY
PUBLISHER:
MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE:
OCTOBER 2002

Lead King Arthur and his Round Table buddies into battle. The ambitious plan with this is to merge the ancient action with some RTS-style strategy.

going on. This game features only the BMX bit.

LEGION: THE LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR

DEVELOPER:
7 STUDIOS
PUBLISHER:
MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE:
DECEMBER 2002

One of the most eagerly awaited games ever will look its best on Xbox.

Gloriously slick hack-and-slash combat with great characters. We want it immediately.

CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER

DEVELOPER:
HITMAKER
PUBLISHER:
SEGA
RELEASE DATE:
NOVEMBER 2002

We previewed this in Issue 03. The third in the series of not-sensible commuter transportation games should be the best yet.

RIDGE RACER VI

DEVELOPER:
NAMCO
PUBLISHER:
NAMCO
RELEASE DATE:
DECEMBER 2002

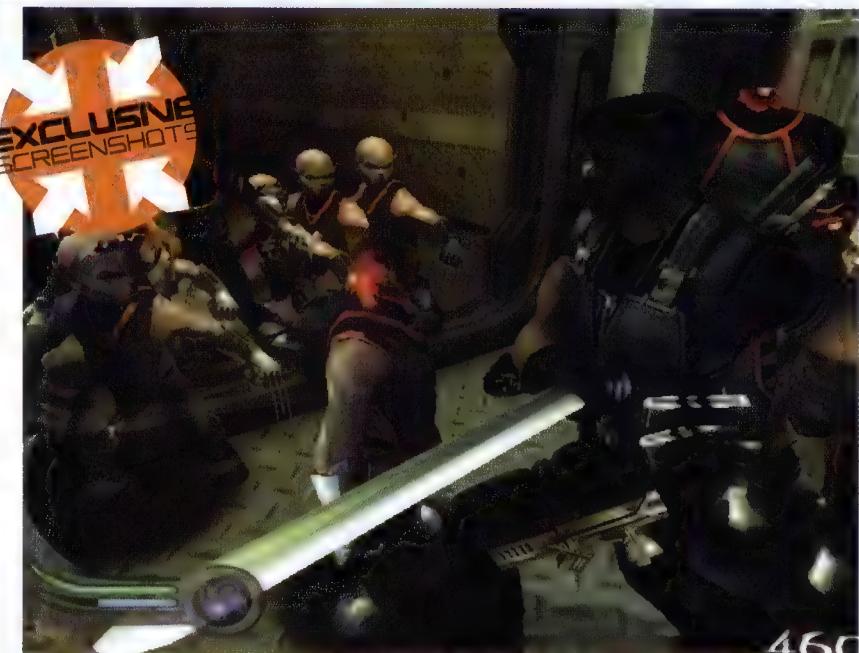
Ridge Racer IV was a smashing game. *Ridge Racer V* made you want to smash things. Can the arcade racing series return to greatness on Xbox?



↑ First come, first staked...

> BONUS INFO

>> FANG GANG
As well as the vampires of the first movie, and the suck-anything Reapers of the second movie, *Blade II* the game will feature all-new vampire clans. Nothing much is being given away about them right now, but look forward to discovering and wiping out some exciting new species.



↑ Eew... loads of little diddy vampires! Quickly - hack their heads off and run away!

BLADE II

The Daywalker is coming out to slay again

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: MUCKY FOOT

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

↑ With as many enemies as this, you need 360° attacks.



↑ Developer Mucky Foot isn't holding back on the blood and guts.

THE MOVIE *Blade II* caused a stir in the cinema recently, and it's soon going to be doing similar things on Xbox. Naturally, you play as half-vampire vampire-killer Blade and go around slaying hundreds of undead in spectacular style. With up to thirty neck-suckers coming atcha at any one time, you need to be agile, which is why *Blade II* uses a cool two-stick control system.

One thumbstick moves you around the level, while the other can be flicked in any direction to give you 360° attacks, letting you run away in style by back-peddling while firing in every direction.

As well as good old-fashioned fists and feet, Blade also has plenty of vamp-splattering weapons. Guns, knives and stakes all feature, as does a super-powerful sword when you enter the souped-up Blood Rage mode.

All the weapons are based on ideas from the writer of the movie, and so fit in with the stylish feel of the series. There's also masses of gore flying all over the place as you hack through the hordes of enemies. Vampire bodies explode in showers of guts or disintegrate into twitching skeletons. As they do in real life. 



↑ Malice in suitably Xbox-themed hues.



↑ SWAT: Global Strike Team. Chat and kill.

SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAMDEVELOPER:
ARGONAUTPUBLISHER:
VIVENDIRELEASE DATE:
NOVEMBER 2002

A squad-based FPS that lets you instruct your team-mates by voice, via the Game Commander. Start polishing your 'INCOMING!' yell as of now.

MALICE: KAT'S TALEDEVELOPER:
ARGONAUTPUBLISHER:
VIVENDI

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

A platformer with nice spangly graphics. And a hammer. There was a movie on Issue 02's Game Disc - take a peek.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECONDEVELOPER:
REDSTORMPUBLISHER:
UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE:

OCTOBER 2002

Another game spun off Mr Clancy's doorstep military tech novels, and another squad-based FPS. In this one, you're cast as a

member of the Ghosts - a covert anti-terrorist squad.

GALLEONDEVELOPER:
CONFOUNDING FACTORPUBLISHER:
INTERPLAY

RELEASE DATE:

NOVEMBER 2002

Will this pirate adventure ever come out? It's from the creator of Lara Croft, mind, and so should be worth waiting for.

SPLINTER CELLDEVELOPER:
UBI SOFT

MONTRÉAL

PUBLISHER:

UBI SOFTRELEASE DATE:
DECEMBER 2002

We had our first look at this in Issue 03 under its former name *Third Echelon*. Promising to out-do *Metal Gear Solid* in the stealthy third-person stakes.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINEDEVELOPER:
SONIC TEAMPUBLISHER:
SEGA

RELEASE DATE:

SEPTEMBER 2002

The third in the much-loved *Rainbow Six* series will feature 15 tactical missions - including taking out an armed gang of robbers holed up in a London bank. We rather like the sound of that.

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X RATED

DVD ESSENTIALS FOR XBOX

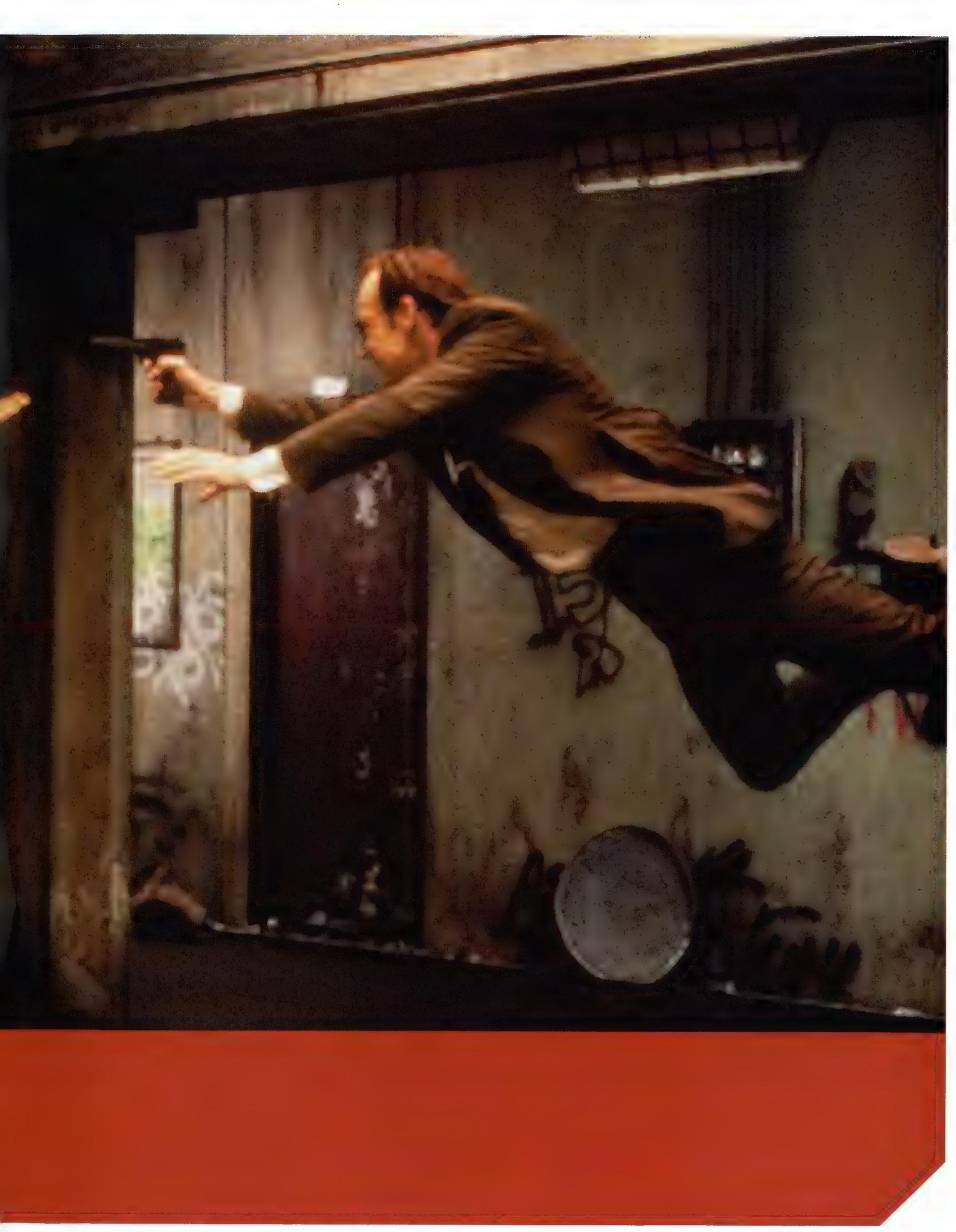
Gaming is a lot of fun, but sometimes you just want to sit back and watch a film. Join us as we guide you through getting the best DVD performance out of your Xbox.

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

THE PAST FIVE YEARS have seen a revolution in home cinema, and we owe it all to DVD. By bringing superior sound and video quality to the mass market, DVD has set in motion a chain reaction of value and performance in home cinema gear. As more people invest in DVD players, the better the technology gets, and the greater the economies of scale. Plus, the more DVDs are on the market, the more likely the studios are to bring out more and more of our favourite titles. It's win-win.

DVDs bring many advantages to home viewing, even for the non-enthusiast. Their compact size doubles the capacity of any shelf, and the slim lines of their cases look attractive in any setting. They allow for multiple audio and subtitle tracks, and the inclusion of extra documentary features. You can choose any scene from a film at the press of a button, scroll rapidly back and forth through the action, and even freeze frame. The V in DVD truly stands for "versatile."

While the Xbox doesn't support DVD playback as-is, its DVD-ROM drive can be persuaded to play any DVD disc with the installation of a simple and inexpensive upgrade. With an Xbox DVD remote in hand, the sky's the limit, and in the following pages we'll help you get the most out of DVD on the Xbox.



DVD CONTROLLER

Once you've made the decision to invest in the Xbox DVD kit, installing it is a painless process.

STEP ONE: Open the packaging. This by far the most difficult stage, as the packaging on the kit is made from almost indestructible plastic. If you're going to use a sharp object to open it, make sure you have an adult supervising you. **STEP TWO:** Insert two standard size AAA batteries in the remote control. **STEP THREE:** Click the IR receiver into an unused controller port on the front of the Xbox. Make sure the DVD logo is the right way up. **STEP FOUR:** Turn on the Xbox, and away you go! There's no pesky software to install - your Xbox is now a fully functional DVD player.

THE REMOTE
UNIKE THE PS2, you can't use one of the regular Xbox controllers to operate DVDs. And why would you want to, with this spiffy little piece of gear in your hands? The main features are fully explanatory, but here are some tricks to getting the most out of your remote.

>> REVERSE, PLAY, FORWARD: Play sets the movie rolling at normal speed, while reverse and forward set the clock moving faster than usual. The speed can be increased in powers of 2, up to a possible 32 times the normal movie speed.

>> SKIP - : Jumps back a chapter.
>> STOP: Stops the film and returns you to the menu.

>> TITLE: Takes you to the title menu.

>> MENU: Takes you back to the menu.

>> CENTRAL ARROW MATRIX: These four arrows and the Select button are for navigating menu screens. The Arrows can also be used to move around the screen in zoom mode.

DISPLAY This elliptical green button at the top of the controller brings up an on-screen display at the bottom of the screen. From here, it's a snap to change audio and subtitle options. The A-B repeat feature allows you to cycle one segment of footage endlessly, and the setup option lets you configure your Xbox's clock and so forth. You can change camera angles, and zoom in on still or moving pictures. Be warned - DVD video may look silky smooth at full size, but gets chunky the more you zoom in.

>> SKIP + : Jumps forward a chapter.
>> PAUSE: Freezes the movie in its tracks after a few minutes in pause, the Xbox automatically goes into screen saver mode.

>> INFO: Displays a timer showing how many hours, minutes and seconds of the feature have elapsed.

>> BACK: Takes you back up one layer of the menu tree.

>> NUMERICAL KEY PAD: Exactly what it looks like.

PLAY

NEED BASIC KIT?

THE XBOX DVD KIT is cheap as chips and we expect any Xbox owner with any interest in DVDs would have one already. However, we've got one spare unit in the office, and we figure we should offer it as a prize to one lucky reader. Send entries to "Give Me DVD, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355, and answer the following question: what DVD region is Australia in? Don't forget to include your name, address and contact details.

PLUG
THIS IS THE power of the DVD kit most people forget about: the vast majority sign on that have been manufactured since the mid-1990s. Setting it up is as simple as plugging it into any of the Xbox's four controller ports.



↑ Note the symmetrical speaker placement and tasteful decor. Every Official Xbox cover is suitable for framing.

THE HOME CINEMA

Behold, the Official Xbox gaming lounge. Even if you can't afford a rig as flashy as ours, there are still a few tricks you can use to get the most out of your gear.

THE LAST FEW YEARS have seen a revolution sweep the home entertainment industry. Not that long ago, the best we could hope for was a mono VCR and drab cathode tube TV. "Home cinema" was the stuff of pulp sci-fi and the ultra rich. But converging trends have put an immersive home entertainment experience within the reach of just about everyone. Every day, TVs and surround sound systems get cheaper and more sophisticated. And every day you go without, the urge to upgrade becomes more compelling. The fact is, not only can you afford home cinema, you deserve it.

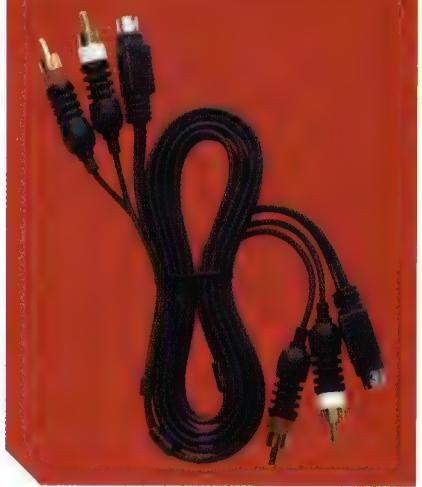
A cursory glance at the choices available is a recipe for confusion, but a methodical approach will see you through the home cinema minefield. There are two main systems to consider: sound and vision. Depending on your budget, there are a wide variety of options for both. But the choice of display is easier, as to get performance that significantly exceeds the standard CRT TV, you have to spend a lot of money. For an entry level LCD projector, you're looking at a minimum of five grand; ten for a good one. Chances are, the TV you've got now is the one you'll be stuck with.

It's not all bad news, as the sound options are much more interesting. The bare minimum is to move an existing stereo into the TV area and plonk the speakers on either side of the telly. The basic rules of acoustics for music listening still apply; ideally the listener and the two main speakers should be at the points of an equilateral (or at least an isosceles) triangle. The speakers should face the listener, and the listener should face the gap between them, in this case the television.

There are several competing standards vying to become the *de facto* choice in home cinema, but for now all you need is a Dolby Digital compatible system. For the wary or the lazy, many fine package deals are available from leading manufacturers. You can get one for as little as \$600, or go the whole hog with a set from Bose. The other option is to buy the components individually, and build up your system from scratch. One starts with the receiver, then the front and centre speakers, the rear speakers, and finally the sub-woofer for earth-shattering bass. Whatever road you take to full 5.1 sound, remember to shop around, and find the solution that's right for you.

THE CORDS

If you can afford, or already own a dedicated home cinema receiver, the first step to getting the most out of it is to get the right cords. The basic AV leads that came with your Xbox only support RCA stereo, so you'll have to splash out for one extra bit of gear. The Xbox Advanced AV pack from Microsoft comes with a digital output for Dolby Digital or DTS surround sound. It could be argued that Microsoft could have made the Xbox with a built-in coaxial or optical port, but they chose to keep production costs down and make digital sound an optional extra. Besides, if you can afford two or three grand for home cinema sound, you can afford forty bucks for some leads.



BEST OF...



BEST ACTION: DIE HARD

Bruce Willis, back when he had hair. "Now I have a machine gun too. Ho ho ho!"



BEST PERVE: FIFTH ELEMENT

A delightful assortment of freckled, curvy girls. Plus Leeloo, wearing that toilet paper getup.



BEST COMPUTER GRAPHICS: SHREK

The comedy stylings of Mike Myers and Eddie Murphy pale before these glossy visuals.



BEST MARTIAL ARTS: ENTER THE DRAGON

Witness as Bruce Lee fights an entire army of bad guys single handed. Also, best also.



BEST SOUNDTRACK: RUN LOLA RUN

More a video clip than a movie. Over 70 minutes of pulsing German techno. Also best hair colors.

X-RATED

10 DVDS YOU MUST OWN:

These are titles that have stood the test of time, and are better than ever now they've made the leap to DVD. No collection is complete without these gems.



THE MATRIX

THIS IS THE movie that showed us what the 21st century would be like, and the disc that kicked off the DVD revolution. Join Neo, Trinity, and Morpheus in the fight for cyberspace, which oddly enough looks a lot like Sydney.

BUY IT FOR: The blistering surround sound mix, the bullet time effects, the full-on kung fu action, and the plethora of extras. When you need more, go out and buy the add-on disc, *The Matrix: Revisited*.

BEST BIT: As soon as Neo and Trinity resolve to rescue Morpheus from the agents, they try to think of a plan. The best that the addled Neo can think of "We need guns. Lots of guns." Within seconds, the loading area fills with thousands of gun racks.



THE GODFATHER

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S masterpiece is now available in a monster five-disc set. For around \$140 you can own a slice of movie history, and the best gangster action on DVD this side of *The Sopranos*.

BUY IT FOR: Three motion pictures from a master film-maker in his prime. Iconic definitions of the modern art of cinematic storytelling over seven hours of entertainment. Plus lots of tommy-guns and mumbling.

BEST BIT: Definitely the part where the wealthy stable owner gets an offer he can't refuse. From *The Godfather* onwards, the ultimate mob calling card became waking up with a severed horse's head.



ROBOCOP

THE FUTURE OF LAW enforcement, and the best thing to ever come out of Detroit. The star of OCP's urban pacification program, Robocop blasts his way through the criminal underworld, spouting memorable catch-phrases and thousands of bullets.

BUY IT FOR: The director's cut that comes exclusively on the new DVD release, featuring more a lot more gore. Disc also features a director's commentary from Paul Verhoeven, deleted scenes, and more.

BEST BIT: The hostage negotiation scene. A corrupt city official has the mayor held hostage with an UZI, and is making bizarre demands, like for a car that gets "really shitty gas mileage." Robocop defuses the situation by hurling him three stories down to his death.



BLADE RUNNER

THE DEFINITIVE cyber-punk movie, *Blade Runner* was a film ahead of its time. Based on a mind-bending novel by Philip K Dick, it presented a near future world where renegade androids were so advanced they were indistinguishable from human beings. When Deckard (Harrison Ford) falls in love with a replicant, he's forced to face the possibility he may be one himself...

BUY IT FOR: The flying cars, the giant futuristic billboards, the cool TV which magnifies photos, and Priss, the standard "pleasure model." Or wait a few months for the special edition.

BEST BIT: Leon, disgruntled replicant, corners Deckard. Before moving to gouge out his eyes, he says - "Wake up! Time to die!"



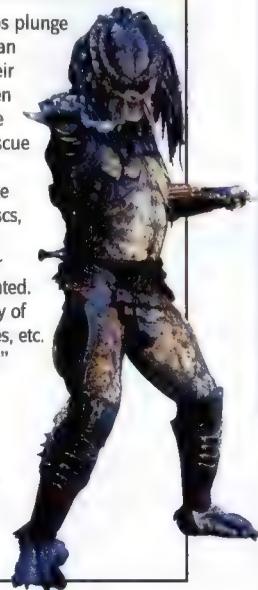


PREDATOR

AN ELITE TEAM of CIA troops plunge deep into the South American jungle to rescue some of their comrades. They find their men skinned alive by an invisible alien monster. Can Arnie rescue the girl and save the day?

BUY IT FOR: The new deluxe special edition spans two discs, with stacks of documentary footage on how *The Predator* was designed and implemented. Plus a comprehensive battery of commentaries, documentaries, etc.

BEST BIT: Jesse "The Body" Ventura, future US state governor, is butchering communist rebels with a preposterous, oversized minigun. When one of his comrades observes he's been shot, he drawls - "I ain't got time to bleed!"



JAWS

FOR GOOD OR ILL, this movie changed the way Hollywood works. Before *Jaws*, studios made movies. After *Jaws*, every studio tried to make blockbusters instead. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. But it's every producer's dream to recaptures the public fervor that surrounded the bloody events on Amity Island, circa 1975. A case in point - *Jaws*' own sequels were all dire, even the one with Michael Caine.

BUY IT FOR: The thudding, unforgettable music, the relatively unpretentious directing from Spielberg, and the mechanical shark.

BEST BIT: Shortly after the film opens, a drunken, skinny-dipping young harlot gets dragged back and forth across the screen and violently ripped apart by an unseen shark.

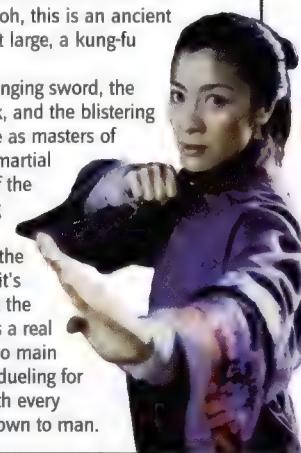


CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

DIRECTED BY the visionary Ang Lee, starring the irrepressible Chow Yun Fat and the sizzling Michelle Yeoh, this is an ancient Chinese legend writ large, a kung-fu tour de force.

BUY IT FOR: The singing sword, the extensive wire-work, and the blistering action. Gaze in awe as masters of choreography and martial skill twirl in front of the camera like fighting demons on crack.

BEST BIT: With all the flying and sparring it's hard to choose, but the climactic cat fight is a real winner, with the two main babes of the piece dueling for minutes on end with every bladed weapon known to man.



BLACK ADDER

AN ALTERNATE HISTORY of England, with the slimy Black Adder (Rowan Atkinson) constantly scheming to seize the throne. At his side is the ever loyal, ever moronic Baldrick, ready to ruin the machinations of his master. From the depths of the dark ages, through to Elizabethan England, the industrial revolution and WWI, Black Adder just can't get it right. Great writing, and top cameos from the likes of Rik Mayall, Adrian Edmondson, and even Tom Baker.

BUY IT FOR: The best comedy available on DVD, bar none. No extras to speak of, but each disc holds an entire season of hilarity, as played by the finest British comedians of the 1980s.

BEST BIT: From the twelve hours of almost non-stop hilarity, it's difficult to choose a single moment of comic genius. How about the time Blackadder hired a new man-servant, called "Kate." Isn't that a bit odd for a boy's name? "It's short for... Bob."

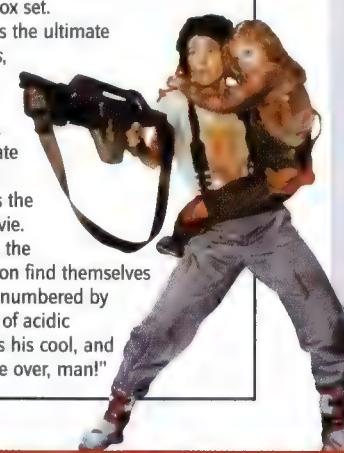


ALIEN SERIES

"IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM." This series re-defined the science fiction genre, populating a grim post-industrial universe with the sinister creations of H. R. Giger. Available separately, or in a box set.

BUY IT FOR: *Alien* is the ultimate horror movie. *Aliens*, with its barrage of one-liners, is the ultimate war movie. *Alien 3* is the ultimate feminist movie, and *Alien Resurrection* is the ultimate French movie.

BEST BIT: In *Aliens*, the Colonial Marines soon find themselves outsmarted and outnumbered by the drooling hordes of acidic aliens. Hudson loses his cool, and starts wailing "Game over, man!"



A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

STANLEY KUBRICK'S definitive look at juvenile delinquency in the not-too-distant future. Malcolm McDowell is Alex, gang leader, Beethoven aficionado and psychopath. Can aversion therapy cure him? Or does evil run deeper than that?

BUY IT FOR: The 5.1 mix, the brutal architecture, the bleak portrayal of humanity, and the haunting Moog music. And don't forget the bizarre future slang, my droogies, unless you fancy a tolchock on the gulliver.

BEST BIT: Kubrick's mastery of the cinematic medium ensures every moment is charged with controversy and suspense, but the single best bit is probably where Alex attacks the old woman with a giant ceramic penis.



THE FUTURE

THERE'S A WEALTH of high quality titles coming to a DVD retailer near you. Look out for *Lord of the Rings*, *Blade Runner Special Edition*, *The Prisoner*, *Back to the Future*, *Transformers: The Movie*, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Monsters Inc.* and more! The Future of DVD is brighter than you can possibly imagine.

BRUTE FORCE

Anatomy of the Next Great Xbox Game

WORDS: FRANK O'CONNOR

A VIDEOGAME, like a movie, is more than the sum of its parts. It's a living, breathing creation that sometimes grows and evolves after its birth, and takes on new life in the hands of every player. So we've decided to dissect one for you, exposing it and showing exactly how it works. For this little surgical experiment, we've chosen *Brute Force*, Microsoft and Digital Anvil's latest. The last time Microsoft released an ambitious shooter, it was a little game called *Halo*... As you'll read in the next few pages, *Brute Force* could very well follow in those giant footsteps.







↑ Looks like a good place to do some sniping.

>> If a game has a brain outside of those of the programmers and artists working on it, then surely it's the game's engine. An engine, for those unfamiliar with the term, is simply the program (or collection of programs) that allows the development team to assemble the disparate elements of the game - physics, graphics, sound effects. A popular example of a game engine is the Quake engine, which is used by companies other than Id to create similar (yet different) game types. *Brute Force*'s engine has been built from the ground up for this game (and for the Xbox) and is both specialized and flexible.

Called (unsurprisingly) the *Brute Force* engine, Digital Anvil assures us it will be used again (although likely in an improved form) to create other games. The engine is split into several major components, all of which communicate very fluidly with each other, and often designers and artists can use the engine's Windows-based interface to literally drag and drop game elements, such as geometry and special effects.

So keep in mind that this engine was designed expressly for use on the Xbox - the same can't even



↑ These nasty reptilian warriors don't look like the sort you'd want to tangle with up close.

be said of the impressive *Halo* engine. So *Brute Force*, at every turn, utilizes Xbox-specific features to their best effect. That means that anything that can be bump-mapped has been. Anything that can be specularly highlighted is so illuminated.

Loading times will be kept to a minimum by caching objects, locales, and textures on the hard drive, accessing them just before they're needed for a seamless experience. Neat technical effects use the Xbox efficiently, drawing in textures only when needed

in order to keep the framerate buttery-smooth. There's nothing here that's desperately unique to the *Brute Force* engine, but it does show off the latest techniques from a team at the top of its game.

Digital Anvil, based in Austin, Texas, currently houses the *Brute Force* team in a historic and eccentric Austin building, resplendent in wood paneling and architectural detail, but not always conducive to a modern game-development company. "Don't turn off my power!" yelled one employee. **>>**

Behind the brains

WITHOUT ERIN ROBERTS, producer, and BILL BELLIN, project director, the full body of work in *Brute Force* would be left flailing around like a chicken with its head cut off. We poke around and find out what makes everything tick.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE: Your roles as a producer and director give you a wide range of responsibilities, but where is most of your time on *Brute Force* taken up?

ERIN: The majority of my time is spent working with the different disciplines inside the team to help pull together our vision for the game. If I were to pick one area which I spend more time on than others, it would be design, closely followed by art. Bill takes care of the technology on the project. I also spend a lot of time making sure that the overall story is working, and flows well through the game. This includes working with the guys on the scripted story scenes, the audio and briefings. The rest of my time is spent on other management and communication tasks inside and outside the team, which is the "work" part of the job.

BILL: I manage the development of the tools and technology, with a focus on advancing the state of the art and pushing them - we're out to create games for what gamers expect. In terms of programming, I work with the programmers,

designers, and artists to make sure everything's lined up toward achieving our design and visual quality goals. One of the most important things I do is try to stay aware of what everyone on the team is up to, and how each person's work is going to affect that of others. For example, when adding breakable objects to the game, it covered the whole chain from the artists creating the broken pieces, the programmers who maintain the Maya [art tool] exporter and the loading code, the designers who have to set up the properties of these objects, to - finally - the programmer who writes the code to actually substitute the broken pieces for the original object and make them behave correctly. And that's a simple example.

OAXM: You've had plenty of experience in the videogame industry - what have you brought from that experience to this project?

ERIN: I started work at Origin Systems in the late '80s, worked for Electronic Arts, and then Digital Anvil. I think there were a number of different experiences which have rubbed off on me in the last few years. The first is actually about learning the importance of having the right set of people working on a project together. (Especially if you are going to live on top of each other.)

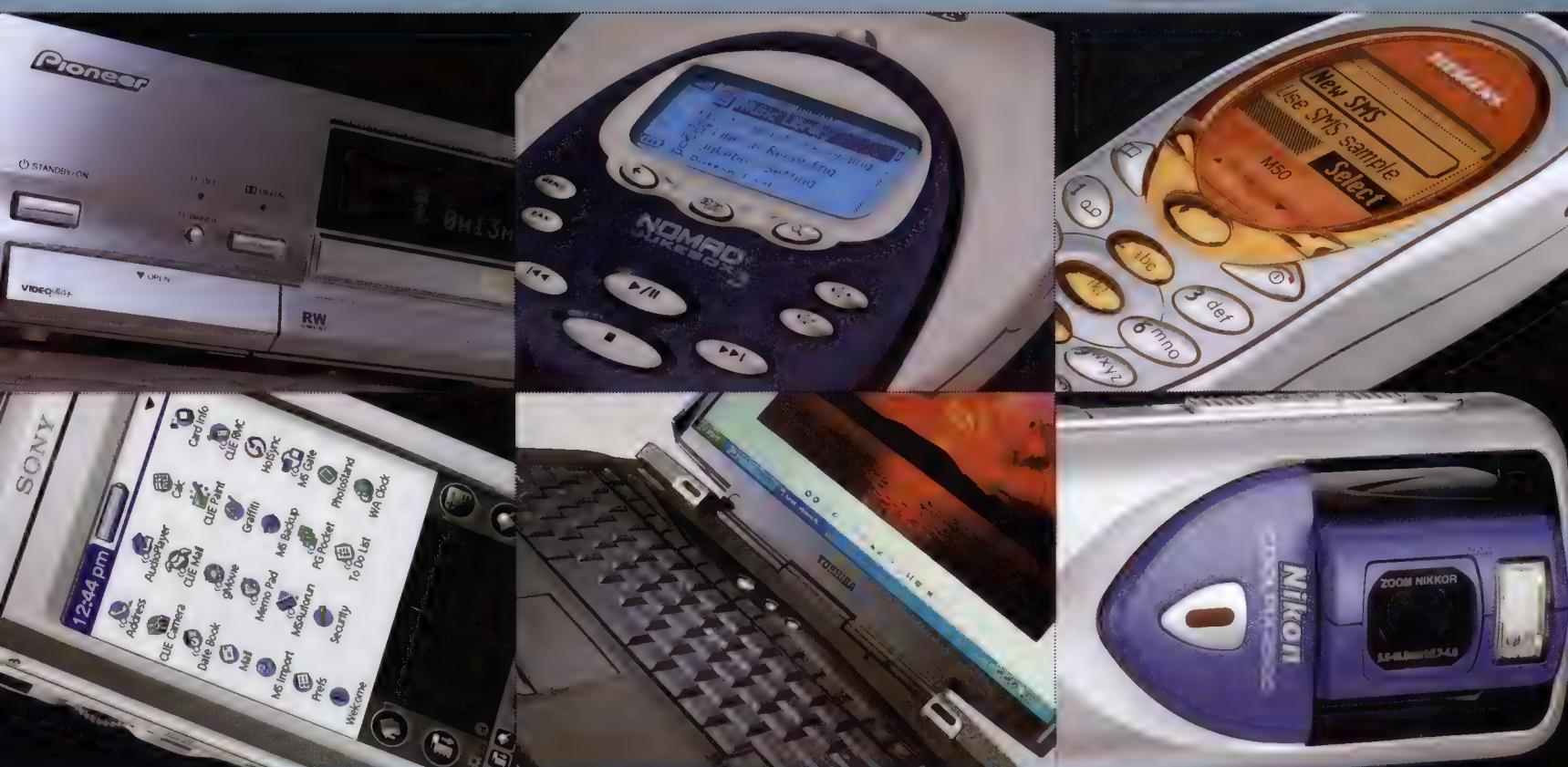


have that on *Brute Force*.) This goes beyond, just the quality of a team, to do they actually get on with people... I've worked with very talented people, but if they do not fit, don't bring them on board...

The next is once you have the right people, make sure you create the right plan. Work out what the important elements of game play will be, and flesh them out. For instance, we spent a lot of time working on the characters, because they're the focus of the game. We didn't just work out how they look, we worked out what their story is, their mannerisms are, how they sound, who do they like/dislike.

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BRUTE FORCE



↑ Your friends can take pot shots from a distance.



↑ Go on, show off those mighty forearms of yours.

Organ Donors

THE FOUR SPECIALISTS you can choose are armed to kill with a variety of weapons and tactics, though they share the same basic skill set. Not surprisingly, it's these differences that make you a master. Want to know more about them? Here they are.

» who'd strung extension cable to a light switch in the frightening basement to power his mass of PC equipment. The company is consolidating to new, high-tech office space this year, but can't possibly do that switch until the game is complete.

"This is the glamorous world of game development," says Erin Roberts, producer, stepping lightly over the drowned corpses of itinerant roaches. "I can't wait 'til we move." If the brains behind *Brute Force* deliver on the promise in this game then they will definitely be moving... "on up, to a dee-lux apartment in the sky."

Gameplay is the heart and soul of any game. *Tetris* doesn't need sound, or even graphics. Modern shooters, however, are often so tied up in the latest graphics engine, or feature such intensive, complex missions, that paring the game down to its bare essentials is difficult.

Brute Force's gameplay is both innovative and classic - a third-person action game with squad-based strategy. Sounds simple, but the gameplay is labyrinthine and always varied, thanks in large part to the fact that the player gets to decide how the game is played.

The very first thing you'll need to do is learn the control scheme - and it's all good news. The game initially uses the *Halo* basics. Anyone familiar with the Bungie game can pick this up instantly.

"We really didn't see any point in re-educating players to use a whole new set of controls," explains Roberts. "*Halo* does things right, so why change it?"

Control schemes early in a system's lifespan are more than a surface measure. Shigeru Miyamoto famously insisted that *Super Mario World* on Nintendo's Super NES use each and every button on the controller to "teach" players how to use it. *Halo*, you'll notice, did exactly the same thing.

The control scheme becomes especially impressive when using the game's four characters. You can swap between characters at any time simply by activating their "compass point" on the digital pad (or use the black button to cycle through them). To give them an

TEX

Tex is a highly decorated soldier, and has been through every hellhole in the Confed. He has a deep mistrust for authority after his last operation, where his commander panicked and abandoned him needlessly to die. Tex has the heaviest armor and weaponry in the team, but he's predictably the slowest. In an intense firefght, Tex will go berserk and charge into battle with two weapons blazing simultaneously, giving him a tremendous advantage against multiple enemies. han fire.

RACE	Human male
ROLE	Assault trooper/heavy weapons
ATTACK	BERSERKER: Pulls out second weapon, and fires both weapons together. Deadly, especially when using two chain guns.
SKILLS	FAST RELOAD: Reloading time reduces significantly with more experience. Barrier Rushing: Can bash through obstacles, from wooden doors to steel reinforced concrete.

BRUTUS

Brutus is a muscular feral warrior who has nothing to do with the Confed. He was once an Operative but has proven his loyalty to the Confederacy. He is the team's best肉盾, able to withstand intense firefghts and deflect enemy attacks. He is also skilled running on all fours.

HOLD	Hold
IMPACT	Impact
CALIBR	Caliber
SHOOT	Shoot
SWING	Swing
THROW	Throw
UP	Up
DOWN	Down
LEFT	Left
RIGHT	Right

order, press one of the four colored buttons (each with its own command), so you can order Hawk, for example, to stay and guard a position with just two finger movements. The process is both elegant and intuitive.

The different characters provide more than just a team of back-up soldiers. Each character has his or her own specific set of skills and even weapons (see below for examples). Learning how best to play with each character, and then when and where to use them, becomes paramount. Even after you've played the game, it will be more than worthwhile to try again using a completely different strategy (not unlike the incredibly deep *Deus Ex*).

The characters very much rely on your instructions, but are smart enough to give you cover fire when needed, or stay out of the way in a melee battle. Players can, if they wish, simply adopt a "favourite," and it's possible (although difficult) to make your way through the game using a single primary hero.

Mission briefings are given (usually) at a central hub called the Solar Observation Deck. The vast majority of this game takes place in a single solar system, featuring four primary planets (and a couple of others you'll have to visit). A mission could be something as simple as wiping out a temple full of alien soldiers, or as devious as a political assassination.

There are in fact two distinct types of mission. "We have these short encounter



↑ Check out the spectacular lighting effects! (and don't forget to kill those nasties too).

HAWK

Hawk is the latest in a line of family members who have served in the Confed military. She is the fastest and quietest character but has the least armor and cannot carry large weapons. In stealth mode Hawk can move without a trace and is undetectable unless in an enemy's direct sight.

ATTACK STEALTH (MODE). Hawk can move without a trace and is undetectable unless in an enemy's direct sight.

SILENT KILL If Hawk gets behind an enemy unnoticed, she can perform a silent kill that leaves her dead.

SKILLS SYSTEM BYPASS. Hawk's tech skills enable her to bypass systems which would otherwise sound alarms, detect motion, etc.

FLINT

Greater Durability

AIR RECYCLING. Flint can recycle oxygen, letting her to survive in toxic or vacuum atmospheres.

BRUTE FORCE



With all the special effects switched on, *Brute Force* will feel like a real war zone.



Loads of alien nasties to kill in a fire fight.

Strategy

Q WE PUMP INFORMATION out of Tim Fields, lead designer of *Brute Force*. What does he have to say about the game's strategy? "The basic theme is combat," says Tim. "How do you describe how that works?"

TIM: It's brutal. First you control a squad of terminally Unpleasant. You'll have to figure out which weapons will turn the aliens when determining which type of strategy to use in any situation. There are always several different ways to accomplish an objective in *Brute Force*. For example, you can set up your guys blocking fire lines and those other teams to eliminate and destroy all your opponents and blood. You can certainly accomplish any of that whatever way, but you can always blood the others in any particular situation. In addition, there is a mission system, which would allow you to directly assign tasks to your team members.

Q: **XXM:** How varied are the levels in *Brute Force*? What type of environments can we expect?

TIM: One of the great strengths is the diversity of the environments. From the nightmare wastes of human deep in the Wastes, to the volcanic waste of the mad corners on Tiamat.



missions that break up the pace a little," says Tim Fields, the game's lead designer. "They can be as short as 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The longer missions, the core plot missions, are usually longer and tougher, and you have to play those."

And the plot is pretty exciting stuff. You play the part of an elite combat squad called, of course, *Brute Force*. The twist to this merry little band, however, is that they are clones. Most of them have been killed and re-cloned at least several times. If you have seen the Schwarzenegger movie *The Sixth Day*, you may have an idea of how complicated that can get. This somewhat dark aspect of the game plot helps open up the universe to other, even more serious, matters. We won't spoil anything for you, but if you thought *Halo* was full of twists and turns, *Brute Force* will come as a pleasant and evocative surprise. Let's just say that the distinction between good guys and bad guys isn't always terribly clear.

Multiplayer modes are genuinely innovative, with a unique hot-swap feature that may propel *Brute Force* to legendary status. At any time during a single-player game, up to three other players may join in simply by plugging in another controller. They can then cooperate fully with you to help you with a mission. There's no penalty for this assistance, and players can leave a game as easily as they can join it. So if a section or mission is proving tough, you can easily call for assistance.

And if you don't feel like cooperating, you can always choose from one of several other multiplayer modes, including Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, and (we're promised) other, more innovative modes.

Back in single-player land, things are getting difficult. The enemy's AI is almost equal to that of your comrades, and if they detect you, they'll use tactics rather than simply charging. You can turn their smarts against them, however, since they'll respond to your actions offensively and defensively. Toss a gas grenade at a group of aliens, and if it doesn't kill



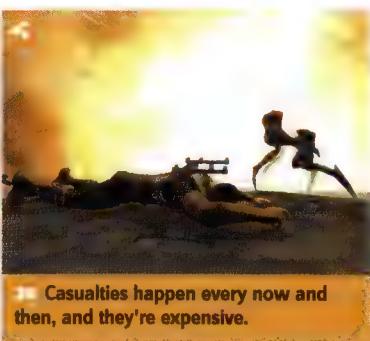
Our square-jawed hero moves in with his mates for the attack.



Click between supporting characters for greater killing efficiency.



BAM! Alien get toasted in another brilliantly co-ordinated attack.



Casualties happen every now and then, and they're expensive.



↑ Crew member dead? No worries: just clone him again and you'll be back up to speed.



↑ Start a bonfire with your fallen alien foes!

"The most visually remarkable elements in the game are the special effects."

them, the thick, noxious gas will hinder their view, allowing you a chance to press the attack.

Naturally, weapons play a huge role in the game. Each character begins with his or her specialist weapons, but can upgrade, buy, and even find new guns. Four types of grenade are available, and two types of bombs, including the appallingly dangerous Wheel Bomb, which rolls around until it finds something soft and alien to blow up.

But those weapons don't come for free - and neither, for that matter, does life. Should you or one of your squad die in battle, there is a cash penalty to replace him or her. Cloning isn't cheap, apparently. Weapons also cost money. This is the future, and while you are working for a government agency, you're not apparently on the health plan.

If this game sounds almost frighteningly large and deep, then we're describing it correctly. It's a true epic, not just in scale and span, but in style and substance too. Fields estimates that "a good player will take about 30 or 40 hours to play through this, without exploring any of the side paths in missions." Sounds good to us.

A game doesn't have to look good to be fun, but it certainly helps, and at the moment, few games look better than *Brute Force*. Its environments, characters, and special effects are destined to become standard-setters for other Xbox titles.

Brute Force has a unique graphic look. It's neither cartoonish, nor realistic, yet still manages to

borrow successful themes from each of those styles. The result is a startlingly vibrant and atmospheric world, with lush environments and convincing and charismatic inhabitants.

The first thing you'll notice is that these screenshots look pre-rendered. They most certainly are not. These shots are taken from the game running in its normal TV mode, and while some of them are definitely posed for drama, they are totally representative of the game's appearance. What they don't show, however, is how smooth both animation and frame rates are.

The animation was all key-framed (basically, done by hand) and no motion-capture was used. It's hard to believe when you watch characters run, however, that no actors were involved. They each have weight, heft, and momentum, with Brutus being particularly impressive as he breaks into his four-legged lopé. Even faces are animated, reacting to situations with



appropriate expressions (yup, there's a lot of grimacing and not too many grins). The alien species you'll encounter vary wildly, as do their style and types of movement.

The game design originally called for 16 characters to choose from but was honed and sharpened down to just four. Impressively, that's one of the few changes to the original plan, and a little bird tells us that not all of those extra characters are necessarily lost forever...

But the most visually remarkable elements in the game are the special effects - easily the best we've seen so far on the Xbox. Grenade explosions belittle those found in *Halo*, and bigger explosions look astonishingly real. More subtle effects like cloud formations and wind use particle and lighting effects to create eerie alien worlds. Leaves blow past you on one planet, while almost invisible flakes of ash settle gently around you on another. The effect is again subtle, but incredibly immersive.

"These things are tiny, too," says effects artist Jason Decker, as he demonstrates a photo-realistic nuclear explosion. "Just a few K per

BRUTE FORCE



↑ Brutus' animal instincts can be crucial in close encounters.



↑ Vegetation is moist and dank on these levels.



↑ Our heroes pose on Brutus' home world.

Eye Candy Factory

GEAT ART DESIGN is more than polygon counts and bump-mapped textures. What makes a game beautiful is the way the technology is used to create a visually arresting world. Art Directors Rhett Bennett and Scott Peterson share their vision.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE: Describe the style and look you were trying to achieve in Brute Force.

SCOTT: *Brute Force* is a mixture of graphic realism and a unique style that developed through creative iteration, and a conceptual understanding that one approach to successful graphic design is to begin with realistic and recognizable elements, and then to introduce stylized elements intended to enhance a particular effect or personal emotion. Through

this mixture of artistic style and realism we are able to significantly enrich our environment with form and color and create beauty, tension, and ultimately a more unforgettable experience.

RHETT: *Brute Force* has a look of stylized realism which allows us to take liberties where we see fit while exposing the player to characters and environments of extreme detail.

OAMX: What elements of the graphic design are you most satisfied with?

SCOTT: *Brute Force* environments and characters are extremely well modeled and textured. The Xbox gives our artists the freedom to build models at high resolution, and the texture materials each have color, specular, and bump-mapping.



↑ Do you like your mutants sauteed or fried?

effect and they don't really hurt bandwidth either.

The Xbox makes that kind of thing really easy."

As the demonstration continues, we're shown that the layers of cloud and light flitting by in the sky are actually affecting the pattern of light and shadow on the ground, an effect preternaturally reminiscent of a storm-tossed summer day. The corona effect around Flint's eyes as she uses her sniping ability is also understated and attractive, re-creating a cool depth-of-field effect without interfering with your view.

You can admire all of these elements from afar, but get up close and personal and you'll find that the game's attention to detail gets positively macroscopic. Textures are very, very detailed. Many of the close-up textures use eight layers to create a convincing effect,

including bump-mapping for most surfaces. Tree bark looks like tree bark, and sand ripples and waves are just like the real thing, complete with shadows. Walk on the sand and you leave a bump-mapped footprint.

Architecture, too, has made its mark on the game. Scott Peterson, one of the game's art directors, notes, "We used the styles of a couple of famous architects as inspiration, including Lebbeus Woods and Neil M. Denari. But important as the look was, we really wanted these buildings and structures to look real, and use indigenous materials. On Ferix, a tree planet, buildings are carved out of trees, and structures made of wood. On Shadoon, the architecture is iconic, and the buildings made out of volcanic rock."

The variety between worlds is truly dazzling. One mission has you gazing over an azure, untroubled ocean, while another sets you among violent lava flows and volcanic disruption. Each world looks dramatically different from the last. Most of the geometry and buildings were created in Maya using NURBs, a kind of curved surface quite unlike a polygon, and although the game is eventually turned into polys, the process of creating it with NURBs has a pleasingly organic effect on the final look and feel of the worlds.

And the worlds! Some, such as the Earth-like Caspian, are almost familiar, while others are profoundly alien. Singe re-creates the tortured, volcanic surface of Mercury, and its thin atmosphere

SURGICAL PRECISION

BRUTUS, at home on this planet, has already taken off into the jungle to scout.

TEX is best used in a melee fight against multiple enemies.

IF YOU FIND some enemies switch to Flint and see if you can get a shot.

YOU COULD also use Hawk to go invisible and see what's hiding in the foliage.

1

2

3

<



"Brutus sounds amusingly like a cross between Spock and *Futurama*'s Morbo."

does little to prevent the massive meteor impacts that are not only aesthetically staggering, but also deeply dangerous. It's probably a hard hat area.

Ferix is the homeworld of Brutus, and its lush forest floor is matched only by the soaring treetop aeries inhabited by his kinfolk. A watery world called Estuary shows off the glittery and realistic water tech, and mysterious Shadoon holds visual as well as visceral surprises. And if planets bore you, try exploring The Wastes, a barren scattering of asteroids at the limit of this new solar system.

Sound used to be the very last thing added to a game. Even modern movies tend to shunt sound towards the end of the process, but the advent of digital sound and, in the case of the Xbox, positional audio means that the process is more than a collection of tune and explosions. Rather it becomes an intrinsic part of the experience, sketching out atmosphere and drama, but simultaneously providing real gameplay input. If you hear a noise behind you in surround sound, you'd darn well better turn around and check for aliens. Of course, the current adoption rate of surround sound means that games are still being designed primarily with stereo in mind.

Since the game is highly dependent on plot, there's a lot of voice interaction between characters, both in-game and during expositional movie sequences. The latter are pretty straightforward - the actors stand in a booth and act out a script, but the former requires careful planning. Characters must talk frequently, but without using repetitive phrases. They grunt, yell,

chat, and even flirt, and these sound bites often do more to flesh out their personalities than the longer set-pieces. Look no further than the chatter of marines in *Halo* to witness the kind of aural experience *Brute Force* is set to deliver.

One of the voices, Hawk, is provided by Susan Eisenberg, who also voices Wonder Woman on the new Cartoon Network show *Justice League (SP)*. She's destined to become something of a sex symbol, thanks in part to her cynical-yet-flirty banter, especially with Tex, the only human male on the squad.

Brutus sounds amusingly like a cross between Spock and *Futurama*'s Morbo (the alien newsreader), as he sullenly intones his desire to crush aliens, or dismisses the human allies he sees almost as children.

Music is another matter entirely. "We wanted to go with a unique, atmospheric theme for the game," says T.J. O'Leary, the audio director, "And so we're using these subtle, percussive sounds to create a backdrop rather than a conventional score." Thudding taiko drums and thunderous bass demonstrate the point admirably. "You've got to give them bass!" he explains. "People love driving that bass." You know it.

The atmospheric music may not be the typical choice of techno or John Williams rip-offs, but it creates a wonderful tapestry of noise that is creepy and atmospheric without being discordant. There will be other types of music depending on where you are in the game, including (highly digitally modified) throat singers on Brutus' home planet, simultaneously melodious and aggressive sounding, if such a thing is possible.

In Motion

KYLE CLARK, animator, explains why the animation in *Brute Force* is so important to the finished product...

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE: What kind of animation techniques have you applied?

KYLE: From a technical standpoint, we've hand-animated every animation in the game. We felt this provided the most control and allows us to continually evolve the characters as the game progresses. Aesthetically, we're tailoring the motion sets to match the style created by the environments. We want motions that are effective from a visual standpoint, but don't stray far from real-world physics. In addition, we're incorporating as many variations of motions as possible. Personality plays a big part in *Brute Force*. We're working very hard to create distinct motion sets for each race. These characteristics help support the complex worlds created by the design and art teams.

OAMX: How closely is animation working with the rest of the design team?

KYLE: We work very closely with the design and art teams. Our job is to make sure that the characters look good and move as required. If they need a specific motion, we'll do everything possible to make it happen.





OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

Z REVIEWS

We pride ourselves on bringing you the very best reviews possible.

REVIEWING SETUP



WE REVIEW games on a 32 inch PHILIPS Matchline III digital TV. As well as a brilliant widescreen picture, this beauty boasts Dolby Digital surround sound and has wireless FM rear speakers. Apart from giving us all TV-insecurity when we think of our humble sets back home, it means we've got the best environment in which to play and test every Xbox game to the limit. For more info check out www.philips.com.au.

SCORE KEY

8.5-10.0

THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

7.5-8.4

A TOP QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

6.5-7.4

STILL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

5.1-6.4

AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

2.6-5.0

A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

0.0-2.5

CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELOUS

THE TRUTH

WE ONLY REVIEW the finished Australian version of a game - the version that you will be paying for and playing. The US or Japanese release will often differ from its Australian counterpart. By sticking to this policy, we will never mislead you by reviewing imported games or preview versions.

Microsoft has no access to, or influence over, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. The company supplies us with screenshots, info and games before any other magazine. We don't do deals with Microsoft, or any other publisher, to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

THE VERDICT

POWER

How technically adept is the game? Does it make proper use of the Xbox? How impressive is it?

STYLE

How stylish is the game? How well is each aspect of it designed? How good does it look and feel?

IMMERSION

How involving is the game? Will hours fly by in minutes? Are the controls instinctive or awkward?

LIFESPAN

How much is there to the game? How long will you keep coming back to it? Is it worth the money?

GOOD POINTS

+ WE'LL SUM UP SOME OF THE GAME'S BEST AND MOST EXCITING POINTS FOR YOU HERE...

BAD POINTS

- ...AND LET YOU KNOW WHAT'S PARTICULARLY BAD ABOUT IT HERE

SUMMARY

This is our overall opinion of the game, condensing the review into one easy-to-digest comment.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

10 // 10

WHAT OUR BADGES MEAN

At the start of a review, along with the Game Information box telling you who's made the game, when it's out, how many people can play, and the official website address, you may see a badge or two. This is what they stand for:



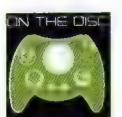
XBOX ELITE
Any game scoring 8.5 or more is given our Xbox Elite award. Wherever you see this badge you can be sure a great game awaits you.



GAME OF THE MONTH
Every issue we give the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* team's favourite release the Game of the Month award.



ONLY ON XBOX
If you see this badge at the start of a review, you'll know that Xbox is the only console on which you'll be able to play that game.



ON THE DISC: PLAYABLE
This badge means that a playable demo of the game is featured on our exclusive Game Disc, so you can try it for yourself.

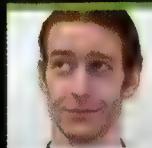


ON THE DISC: MOVIE
If our exclusive Game Disc includes footage of the game in action, we'll let you know with this badge.

THE TEAM



KEVIN CHEUNG //
EDITOR



DAN TOOSE //
WRITER

KEVIN made an exception to his dislike for platform games starring fury animals propped up on their hind legs, giving the thumbs up to *Blinx*.

CURRENT FAVOURITE
GAMES: *Hunter: The Reckoning*, *Burnout*
DREAM XBOX GAME:
Streets of Rage



JAMES COTTEE //
WRITER

JAMES'S head was sent spinning at the sight of *Steel Battalion* and *Phantom Crash* at E3. "Giant Robots!", he gleefully exclaimed on several occasions.

CURRENT FAVOURITE
GAMES: *Burnout*
DREAM XBOX GAME:
A remake of *Wizball*



JAMES ASHTON //
STAFF WRITER

WHEN THINGS get hectic in the office, James is always in the thick of the action - playing *Halo* in the games room.

MATT WOLFS //
WRITER

IT WAS tough containing Matt this month. "Best E3 ever!" he proclaimed, "100% improvement over last year!" Tranquillisers please!

CURRENT FAVOURITE
GAMES: *MotoGP*
DREAM XBOX GAME:
Capcom Vs Guilty Gear
Vs Marvel Vs SNK Online



RALPH PANEBIANCO //
WRITER

TOO COOL to hang out with us at E3, Ralph used the opportunity that came with our absence to try his new pick-up lines on the ladies of the local campus.

CURRENT FAVOURITE
GAMES: *Blood Omen 2*
DREAM XBOX GAME:
Star Wars: KOTOR



GAVIN OGDEN //
NEWS EDITOR

GAV'S BURPS are improving. He can now do belches that sound as if stomach is ready to pop out of his mouth at any time. They smell like it already has.

CURRENT FAVOURITE
GAMES: *Halo*, *Amped*
DREAM XBOX GAME:
Doom III

THE PICK OF THE GAMES

**BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**

Vamp-dusting, the way God intended it.
Read all about it in our exclusive review.

074

**GUN METAL**

Wow! it's a robot. Whoah! It's a plane!
Now it's a robot again! Cooool...

082

**GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY**

The elderly arcade classic comes home again. And gets mugged on the way.

086

NEW LEGENDS

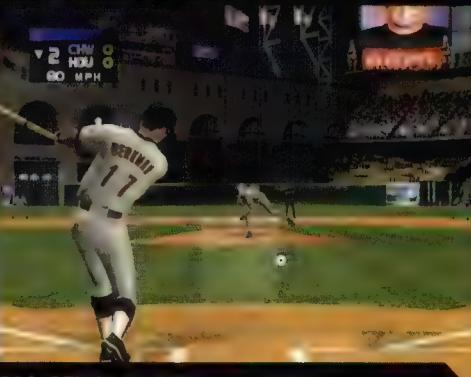
No, it's not a Nintendo 64 game.
Stop thinking that right now.

087

**RED CARD**

The foulsome footy game where you can mark opposing players... for life.

092

**ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003**

Balls, bats, and some of the tightest pants you'll ever see in a video game.

091

OTHER REVIEWS

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

A Jedi-powered starfighter? Let's see if it adds that little extra pep we need.

080

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

Everybody's favourite be-crutched cripple hobbles slowly on to Xbox.

088

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS

Extreme figure skating and downhill curling. If only that were the case.

089

MX2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Mucky mudflaps, oversized knobs and big air. And we're not talking about Paul.

090

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 2

It's the only serious competition there is to 2002 FIFA World Cup. But does it stack up?

093

REVIEWS DIRECTORY

A complete listing of every game that's been reviewed by the Official Australian Xbox Magazine.

094

>> NEXT MONTH: In Issue 05 (on sale Wednesday July 24) we should be able to bring you reviews of Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 4, Circus Maximus, Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing, Commandos 2, SSX Tricky, Hunter: The Reckoning, Splashdown, Taz Wanted, Prisoner Of War, and more. And yes, we know we mentioned some of these here last issue, but you know how delays can happen...



↑ The Finishing Touch: Buffy can make short work of her blood-sucking opponents by staking them in the heart at any time.

When everything's gone to Hell and the world needs saving, you need...

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER



WORDS: DAN TOOSE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: THE COLLECTIVE

PUBLISHER: EA/FOX INTERACTIVE

RELEASE DATE: JULY 2002

PLAYERS: 1

WEBSITE: [WWW.EA.COM/EAGAMES/MAIN/
PARTNER/XBOX/BUFFY/](http://WWW.EA.COM/EAGAMES/MAIN/PARTNER/XBOX/BUFFY/)



HO WOULD have thought that a cruddy comedy flick about a high school cheerleader with enhanced physical powers would ever get turned into a decent TV series? More to the point, who would have thought we'd ever see a decent videogame based on that TV series? Well, it seems that the unlikely has now come to pass on two occasions for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* thanks to the efforts of Southern Californian developer, The Collective. >>



↑ Nifty weapons like shovels and broomsticks can be broken up into more wooden stakes.



↑ Two sniffs, don't be greedy.



↑ "Put that in your pipe and smoke it!"



↑ Bare knuckles against bone? Buffy's hardcore!



↑ Purple sparkles mean more powerful moves.



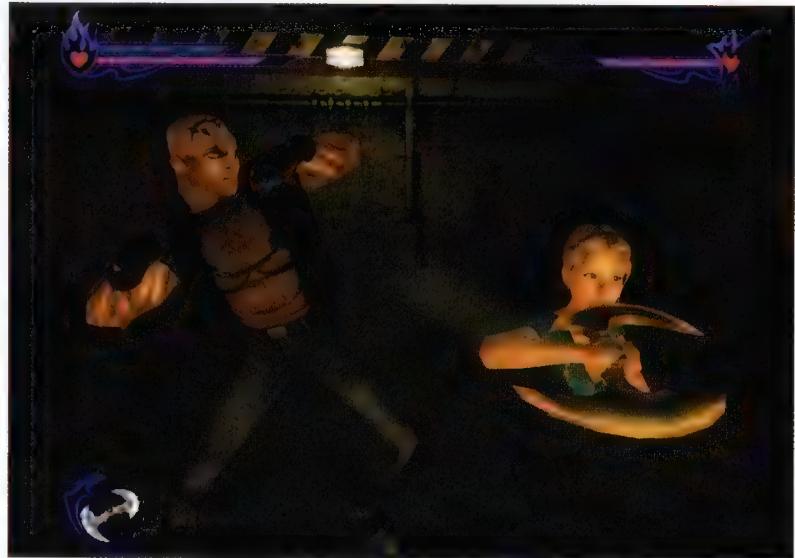
↑ Fiery demon from hell? You betcha.



↑ Buffy and friends, in earlier, happier days

>> BONUS INFO

>> REVERSE FANDOM
If you haven't followed the Buffy series like a religious zealot but would like to change that, know that the first five seasons are available on video and DVD, and that the seventh series is to be the last. You heard it here folks.



↑ "Here, let me introduce you to an item I nicked from Batman's utility belt."

AUTHENTIC >>

No, you're not imagining those voices you're hearing

If you thought getting the real actors in to do the voices isn't really attention to detail, then maybe knowing that the stunt coordinator from the show handled the motion capture duties.

>> The problem with most games based on movies and TV shows is that they clearly rely entirely upon the spending habits of the fans rather than the game itself. There are also times where it's quite obvious that the developers have struggled to find ways to include things from the shows that they're based on which actually work as elements of the game. The *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* game suffers from neither of these problems because it has been designed to play out like an episode of the show.

Buffy's lot in life is to take the fight to the vampires and other nasties that threaten Sunnydale. With combat never far away, her life often resembles a "beat 'em up gone Halloween", making her transition to a game character seem quite natural. While most of the player's time is spent in combat, there are enough puzzles, plot twists and characters to ensure this isn't just one for the legions of Buffy fans, but one that traditional gamers will find equally satisfying.

The game starts with Buffy being

 WE'VE MENTIONED that Buffy the Vampire Slayer takes place in Season Three of the television series chronology, but that'll be meaningless to anyone who's yet to experience the smart, stylish energy of the show. Below you'll find a quick recap on the events of Seasons 1 and 2 to fill you in on the background to this game. If you want to be a true Buffy aficionado, then you should enter our subscriptions competition at page 054 to win the entire first four seasons on DVD!



SEASON ONE

WHEN HER PARENTS divorce, Buffy Summers, teenage cheerleader, and her mum, Joyce, move from Los Angeles to the seemingly quiet 'burb of Sunnydale. Unbeknownst to nearly all, Sunnydale is actually situated atop a Hellmouth, thus explaining its high demon population and rate of mysterious deaths. Soon, Buffy

meets Rupert Giles, the librarian at her high school, who reveals her destiny

as a Slayer, the Chosen One of her generation tasked with fighting evil at every turn. Buffy initially finds this hard to swallow, much inner torment ensues.

The rest of the core characters are swiftly introduced: Willow and Xander, Buffy's best friends at high school; Cordelia, queen bitch and the most popular girl in the year; and Angel, the cursed vampire now given purpose through protecting Buffy.

The main story thread throughout the season concerns a devilish plot by The Master to open the Hellmouth in Sunnydale. Buffy eventually tames her torment, harnesses her new-found power, and defeats him.

SEASON TWO

THIS ONE IS all about the continuing relationship between Buffy and Angel, and the dramatic twist it takes when they finally consummate their feelings for each other.

However, before that happens, two other regulars are introduced - Spike and Drusilla. Back in the bad old days, Angelus had sired Drusilla, who in turn sired Spike. Along with Darla, who had earlier sired Angelus, the vampiric quartet wreaked havoc across the world for nearly two centuries. In fact, so powerful were they that Spike could boast of killing two Slayers in his time. Needless to say, he set his eyes

on Buffy to be number three when he turns up in Sunnydale.

When Buffy shags Angel, he loses his soul and reverts to Angelus again. He teams up with Spike and Drusilla to perform a ritual that will summon a demon and suck the world into hell. At the same time, Willow (now a budding witch) concocts a ritual that will give Angel back his soul. In the climax, both rituals succeed simultaneously, leaving Buffy the agonising choice of whether to kill Angel and save the world or let him live and bring chaos on the world. She chooses the former and condemns her beloved to hell.



"TRULY A BREAKTHROUGH IN LICENSE-BASED GAME DESIGN"

» put through a training mission by her Watcher (advisor on all things supernatural), Giles. After players work through a short series of tasks that teach the basics of using items, moving about, and engaging in hand-to-hand combat, Buffy has a dream offering a hint of what she'll be up against later on in the episode... Er, we mean game.

From there on the game breaks down into different missions, with Buffy heading out to a different location, returning back to the school library as a base of operations. Here Buffy meets up with Xander, Willow, Cordelia and Giles, where they help her with information, weapons, and power ups. Gamers familiar with the show will know that this means that the game not only avoids degenerating into a mindless beat 'em up, but also presents the storyline in exactly same

formula used in the show, which is truly a breakthrough in licence-based game design.

For *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to convince any of the fans that what they're playing has anything to do with their favourite show, it had to look the part. The developers have addressed this by including enough familiar faces and places to ensure the fans feel at home.

Several of Buffy's favourite haunts are there, such as the high school, the graveyard, the library, and Sunnydale's local nightclub, the Bronze. All the locations boast excellent textures, atmospheric lighting, and loads of little details that will matter to fans. Things like Oz's cage being present in the library, or having the overhead walkways in the Bronze in the right spot make all the difference between being token additions for »



↑ Thanks to the magic of computer generated imagery, Buffy the videogame features uglier, more gruesome creatures of the dark than ever before.

>> BONUS INFO

>> MR POINTY, A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND
With vampires everywhere, Buffy always needs a stake handy to ensure she can actually finish them off. Fortunately they're in abundance, which is particularly handy for those who like to try to hurl them into the chest of a vamp out of reach, clearly the most stylish move of the game.

>> FAULTY MIRRORS?
One particularly classy effect that should keep those versed in vampire lore happy is that the mirrors don't reflect your bloodsucking adversaries. This looks particularly groovy if Buffy gets bitten while in front of a mirror, so there's actually a reason to stand there and preen for a change.



↑ Watch those eyes: they move around.

>> the fans and being a faithful representation of the show for the fans.

More importantly, the characters all look uncannily like their counterparts from the show, with the exception of poor old Willow. Instead of coming across as the awkward girl who's really quite cute, she looks more like the nerd who tripped over and landed on her nose. While the rest of the gang may not look photo-realistic, they do look the part, particularly when zoomed in for a cut-scene. Here you can see brows furrowing, smirks creeping onto the edges of mouth, and eyeballs moving about.

Not only does the rest of the gang look right, but they sound perfect, thanks to the entire cast delivering the lines for the voice acting duties. Well, all but one cast member, as Buffy's dialogue has been handled by a young lady who manages a convincing impression. This minor gripe is easily forgotten, as two authors of numerous Buffy novels helped with the script, ensuring the show's verbal dynamic carried through into



↑ Buffy the videogame has all the cool artistic flair of the television series.

the game. All of the characters crack one-liners as they appear throughout the game, which only serves to encourage the player to progress through the game for more. Although it must be said that Buffy herself could use a wider variety of comments to make as things happen during the game, as her amusing remarks swiftly lose their appeal after the umpteenth repetition.

Of course, as a 3D action game, most of the time is going to be spent gazing at Buffy's backside. Fortunately, Gellar has had a very respectable virtual makeover, both in terms of

her 3D model and how well it's animated. Close examination of the Slayer will reveal the common shortfalls characters in games so often have, such as hair strands being shown by solid texture maps, but during play there's little to gripe about.

While not quite matching the animation of a true fighting game such as *Dead or Alive 3*, *BtVS* is brilliantly brought to life with plenty of fluid attacks and special moves. The set-up is more like a classic beat 'em up, with buttons for punch, kick, block, jump and action/stake. Buffy also takes up arms,



THE A-Z OF BUFFY» Words: David Wildgoose

THERE'S A LOT more to Buffy than dusting vamps and doing the wild thing with the exceptionally cute ones - *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is a universe unto itself, with a myriad of terms, phrases, people and colloquialisms that would send the average punter's head spinning. Here's a basic rundown - a Vampire Survival Guide, if you will - on everything you need to know to get your head around Buffy, her friends, and the happenings at Sunnydale.

A is for Angel, the brooding black-clad vampire cursed with a soul. He can't shag for fear of removing the curse and reverting to his prior wicked ways. Consummated his love for Buffy once, but never again. Also known as Angelus when manifested as an evil vampire.

B is for the Bronze, seemingly the only nightspot in the whole of Sunnydale. We would have included B for Buffy here, but it seemed a bit, well... obvious.

C is for the Council, an enigmatic group who research demon activity. As Watchers, they also train each new Slayer.

D is for Dawn, Buffy's younger sister, born of Buffy's blood and inserted into the series during the fifth season courtesy of supernatural intervention. Everyone's memory was altered, as if she had never existed.

E is for Eliza Dushku, who played Faith, the former rogue Slayer now inmate at a Los Angeles correctional facility. Her turn to the dark side, and consequent duels with Buffy, was one of the show's many highlights.

F is for Finn, the surname of Buffy's college boyfriend Riley. A blonde Mr Nice Guy to Angel's black-clad brooding, he was last seen flying south to El Salvador on a secret mission for the Initiative (see below).

G is for Giles, Buffy's Watcher, mentor and father figure. Sadly, he recently returned to England having fulfilled his duty. Now rumoured to be working on his own spin-off series, cunningly titled "The Watcher".

H is for Hush, a fourth season episode regarded by fans as perhaps the best in the series. In it a company of immaculately tailored gentlemen demons cause Sunnydale residents to lose their voice. Nearly the whole show is played without dialogue to remarkably spooky effect.

I is for the Initiative, a government agency tasked with eliminating Hostile Sub-Terrestrials and conveniently staffed by students and teachers of Buffy's college.

J is for Jenny Calender, sultry Computer Science teacher at Sunnydale High and Giles' one true love. Her death at the hands of Angel (as Angelus) brought a tear to this writer's eyes.

K is for the Knights of Byzantium, a medieval order tasked with destroying Dawn (the Key to Hell in physical form) to prevent Glory (the fifth season's "big bad") from unleashing another apocalypse.

L is for the Library where Giles worked and Buffy, Willow and Xander held their so-called "Scooby" meetings. Like any high school library, it contained more tomes on demonology than visiting students.

M is for Mayor Richard Wilkins, the third season's "Big Bad", and easily the best bad guy in the series. His aborted ascension to deity-hood occurred on Graduation Day, resulting in the school's destruction and the death of many students.

N is for Nest. When Riley feels he's losing Buffy, he seeks succour in a local vampire nest, allowing them to feed off his blood.

O is for Daniel "Oz" Osborne (played by Seth Green of *Can't Hardly Wait* and *The Spy Who Shagged Me* fame), the werewolf and part-time rock guitarist. His dry wit was only exceeded by his "trademark stoicism". He was Willow's first shag, too.

P is for Principal Snyder, Sunnydale High's sadistic head honcho. Notable for being the only male character shorter than Oz.

Q is for Queer, which is how Willow transforms after breaking up with Oz and meeting Tara, a fellow wicca practitioner.

R is for Rogue Demon Hunter. When Wesley, Faith's appointed Watcher, leaves the show, he goes rogue, before eventually making a dramatic return at the end of the first season of *Angel*.

S is for Spike, bleached blonde vamp (unwillingly) turned good thanks to a microchip implanted in his head by the Initiative that prevents him from harming humans. Now shagging Buffy and quite possibly the real star of the show.

T is for Tombstone. When Buffy died at the end of the fifth season, hers read: "Buffy Anne Summers. 1980 - 2001. She saved the world. A lot."

U is for Undead. Up to half the cast of each episode tend to fall into this category.

V is for Veruca, the female werewolf and Shirley Manson look-alike who ultimately drove Willow and Oz apart.

W is for Willow Rosenberg, Buffy's long-time friend and witch extraordinaire. But can she control her increasing power and resist the dark side this season?

X is for Xander Harris, Buffy's other long-time friend and goofy wisecracker extraordinaire. Currently betrothed to a centuries old vengeance demon called Anya. They are a perfect couple.

Y is for Yearbook, the Scooby Gang's only legacy of their high school years after the graduation. You can actually buy it from any bookstore with a decent sci-fi section.

Z is for Zombie. Buffy has fought surprisingly few zombies over the years, but considering she has been technically dead on two occasions, she may well qualify as one herself.



↑ Literally the instant before Miss Vampire disintegrates into nothingness.

"IT'S POSSIBLE TO STRING ALL THE ATTACK MOVES TOGETHER TO FORM STYLISH COMBOS."

With both melee and ranged weapons, including a crossbow, a macabre-looking knife device (which you can upgrade), and a super-soaker that can shoot both holy water and hellfire. These ranged weapons also allow a first person perspective for pinpoint accuracy, and long distance dusting.

Adding to the arsenal are a horde of household items throughout the game that double as weapons, such as shovels, mops, and many other breakable items that conveniently shatter to become wooden stakes once stomped upon.

It's possible to string all the attack moves together to form stylish combos, so you can fluidly follow a backhand strike with a stake through the heart in one fluid motion. Those with a keen eye will spot parts of the environment that can be used to finish off an enemy, such as a broken piece of furniture or, more directly, a moving train.

The gradual introduction of special moves encourages players to learn how to fight without resorting to button mashing. This adds a measure of depth that prevents BtVS from being a slideshow for the fans, and keeps it interesting for those who aren't into the show at all.

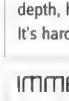
It's not all just touching the hearts of vampires for Buffy, who also comes up against animated skeletons, demonic hound-like

creatures, giant spiders and other suitably terrifying nasties. Enemies who've been slain will cough up either a bit of health or energy for Buffy's special attacks. Best of all are the boss encounters, which include battles with Spike, Drusilla, and others we'll not mention so as not to reveal too much of the plot.

If you're a big fan of puzzle solving, then be warned that the mental challenges posed by BtVS are extremely basic. Finding keys to unlock doors, levers to open gates, or sticking torches into wall fittings is about as tricky as this game will get. Lengthy exploration also reveals one of the more annoying aspects of the game, in which the doors shut behind you after opening them. This makes it hard to tell if you've already been somewhere or not when exploring unfamiliar territory.

The only thing letting Buffy down is the lack of replay value, as there seems little reason to play the game again once completed. This fault actually makes sense since the game follows a singular plot that focuses on one character. Then again, fans who fantasise about Willow and Cordelia would probably die for a chance to put them through their paces. That aside, BtVS provides enough challenge to ensure it'll last at least 16 hours - the length of an entire series of the show.

XBOX THE VERDICT

	GOOD POINTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERY TRUE TO THE TV SERIES. • EXCELLENT COMBAT-BASED ACTION.
	BAD POINTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LITTLE REPLAY VALUE. • REPETITIVE COMMENTS FROM BUFFY.
SUMMARY	
Not the usual TV to video game rush job, Buffy kicks arse, undead and otherwise.	

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.9 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Issue 02 page 027; Issue 03 page 027, Demo Disc 03

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips





↑ Who knew that the Force could be something exercised outside of your ship and in the vast outer reaches of space?

The Force in space? Hey, it could happen

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

WORDS: JEFF LUNDRIGAN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: LUCASARTS

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS

RELEASE DATE: MAY 31

PLAYERS: 1-2 SPLITSCREEN

WEBSITE: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM

IN MUCH THE SAME WAY as the original *Starfighter* was set around the edges of Episode I - taking place at roughly the same time but in different locations - *Jedi Starfighter* takes place at roughly the same time as *Attack of the Clones*. As in the original, the storyline matters little as far as the action goes, although it's worth noting that the story is a lot more coherent this time around.

Jedi Starfighter continues the saga of space pirate Nym and his band of good-hearted outlaws from the first game, then adds a new ally, Jedi Master Adi Gallia (first seen in *Jedi Power Battles*, and hanging around the fringes of the *Star Wars* universe ever since). Mace Windu sends her to aid Nym, who's battling the Trade Federation again. Nym just wants his home planet back, but the Federation's been dealing with Cabil Toth of the Saboath Squadron, a really bad Bad Guy who's developing a powerful weapon of mass destruction - hence, a reason for the Jedi to be involved.

If you played the original *Starfighter*, you will feel right at home. The graphics are

colourful and glossy, the controls feel responsive and quick, and while there's still a bit of slowdown, it's much less noticeable than in the previous game. Otherwise, the way the game is structured and the control scheme are almost exactly the same. In fact, Nym is still flying his Havoc bomber, although he's added a couple of new secondary weapons, including an anime-inspired missile swarm. Master Gallia flies a new craft, the Jedi Starfighter (you expected something else?), however, her secondary weapons aren't part of the craft's weapons system.

Instead, like all good Jedi, she uses the Force in combat and it's a pretty nifty set of powers. The interesting thing about these Force powers is that they have a variable effect: holding down the secondary fire button causes a shimmering halo around the target, and by timing the button release at the point of maximum shimmer, you can extend the effect or increase its power. This is not easy to do in the heat of combat, and adds a cool, different sort of challenge.

BONUS INFO

TAKE A QUEUE
Fans began lining up for Episode II outside Grauman's Chinese theater in Hollywood during the first week of April - a full month and a half before the film's May 16th premiere. And people call us geeks.



↑ The variety of terrain and environments show off some of the cool visual effects in the game.



↑ Some wondrous space effects here



↑ Two player co-op is available in every mission.



↑ Now's not the time to stick around sightseeing...



↑ Things are faster when nearer to the ground.



↑ Stay on target... stay on target...

"THERE ARE A FEW OTHER UNLOCKABLE GOODIES, INCLUDING THE ABILITY TO FLY X-WINGS AND OTHER CRAFT"

ADI WHOP ➤



NAME Adi Gallia.

HOME Planet Correllian.

SPECIES Unknown - humanoid with some weird, white fringes on the back of her head.

OCCUPATION Member of the Jedi Council

HEIGHT 5'10"

WEIGHT She's not telling - and that is a woman's right.

Hobbies Collecting information through her vast network of spies and informants; cooking. BEST KNOWN FOR Failed attempt to thwart the Trade Federation blockade of Naboo; not having a single line of dialogue in *The Phantom Menace*.

» And really, you need all the challenge you can get, because the difficulty level in this game is disappointingly low. It's also questionable whether this novel addition will be enough of a variation on the gameplay formula of its predecessor.

The Story mode can be played through by either one or two cooperating players, but it only offers only 15 missions, plus five training missions. If you have any skill at all, you can comfortably beat this thing within a few days. There's some small consolation in completing the secondary goals of each mission, which unlocks some extra single and two-player levels. While these are certainly challenging (in fact, they're almost impossible), they lack any of the cross-talk or scripted atmosphere of the main game and are, actually, kinda dull.

There are a few other unlockable goodies, including the ability to fly X-Wings and other craft in the main missions, and there are even some rather amusing cutscene "bloopers". However, this doesn't do much to extend the replay value of the game.

Jedi Starfighter is quite appealing if you're a *Star Wars* fan, but consider it more of a snack than a meal. If you don't already have the original, you'll enjoy the heck out of this while it lasts, but it doesn't last long.

XBOX THE VERDICT ➤

POWER

Just a little slowdown shy of excellent. Even the ice planet looks great.

STYLE

Looks just like *Star Wars*, with all the authentic ships, weapons and Jedi lore.

IMMERSION

Very. Every mission unfolds like a story itself, with characters snapping dialogue as they fight.

LIFESPAN

Perfectionists will be able to extend the life of this game by completing all the secondary objectives.

GOOD POINTS

- PUTS YOU RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE
- SNAPPY CONTROL

BAD POINTS

- THERE'S NOT NEARLY ENOUGH OF IT.
- SKews on the easy side for the main missions.

SUMMARY

A decent space-based blaster that's topped with that winning *Star Wars* atmosphere, but it's too easy and there's not enough.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.2/10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is *Jedi Starfighter*'s first appearance in OAXM

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips



↑ A dozen missiles, a salvo of harpoon rockets and only three targets. Did anyone say "overkill"?

Burned out vehicle hulks... bullet-holed panels...
Meet the biggest scrap metal merchant in town

GUN METAL



WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RAGE

PUBLISHER: RAGE

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002

PLAYERS: 1

WEBSITE: WWW.RAGE.CO.UK

[/HTML/GUNMETAL.ASP](http://HTML/GUNMETAL.ASP)

EING THE LAST line of defence is a dream job. If you're needed when things are *really* bad, odds are you're going to be given the meanest machine, the best guns and the coolest gadgets around to get the task done.

And it's not as stressful a career as most people make out. Granted, the fate of your people lies in the balance, but hey, who's going to be around to tell you off if you fail?

Gun Metal sees you taking the helm of an experimental Transformer, a robot that's 10m of explosive, well-oiled justice that can morph into a zippy attack jet within a second. The background of the crisis situation is a little vague - story details are thin on the ground, and the only thing that can be gathered from the intro sequence is that the Blue guys (you) are being shot to hell by the Red Guys (boo hiss). You're the last line of defence, here's your helmet, good luck... But who needs a reason for video game warfare? Storylines get in the way.

There's even less of a lead-in to the action, as you're cut down within seconds of taking incoming in the opening mission when a line of enemy mortars advance on your base. To live longer, you'll have to master strafing and keeping on the move, which means you have to find a control method you can be intimate with and use proficiently with your eyes closed.

And tough as the start is, your proper graduation comes after cracking the awkward, almost unfair difficulty curve of the second level. Conquer this mission, and you'll be in good stead for the rest of *Gun Metal*.



DECISIONS. DECISIONS >>

Air or ground? Napalm or missiles? Every option's so tempting...



>> VULCAN CANNON: Hot lead hose.



>> PULSE CANNON: Perfect accuracy.



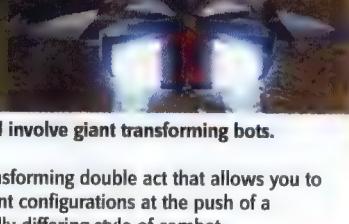
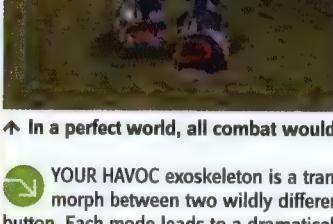
>> MAVERICKS: Fire-and-forget fun.



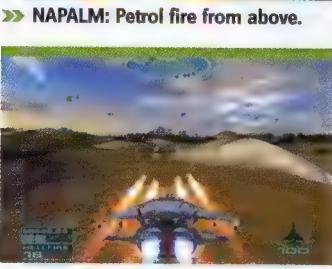
>> TRIDENT: Multiple missile mayhem.



>> NAPALM: Petrol fire from above.



>> DISC LAUNCHER: Razor frisbees.



>> HELLFIRE: Ground-hugging salvos.

YOUR HAVOC exoskeleton is a transforming double act that allows you to morph between two wildly different configurations at the push of a button. Each mode leads to a dramatically differing style of combat. As a bipedal robot, you've got an extra layer of shield, plus you can jump and strafe. On-foot combat usually involves getting up close and dangerous, but since it's suicidal to storm into the thick of the action, it's useful for mopping up any leftover opposition, or for focusing the fury of your combined lasers and artillery on a single badass enemy.

Jet Mode gives you speed, allowing quick fly-over recons or fast getaways. You can launch an air strike over an entire battlefield or hand out serious punishment to a mid-air cruiser. Barrel rolls are also possible, allowing you to sideslip guided weaponry.

To either side, we provide a healthy selection (although not all) of your impressively destructive arsenal (see Gun Mental, below left, for more). Guns go boom. Guns kill. But how can they be so wrong when they feel so right?

>> FLAK GUN: Giant molten shotgun.

"LASER BOLTS SEAR THE AIR AS YOU BARREL ROLL THROUGH TANGLES OF MOLTEN METAL."

>> BONUS INFO

GUN MENTAL
Both the jet and suit forms of the Havoc vehicle have four weapon slots that can be cycled through during play. You begin with the basics, and completing successive missions unlocks an increasingly powerful arsenal. There are 24 weapons in all, and you can choose between three for each of your eight allotted weapon slots during the mission brief. Some are solid, reliable firepower with infinite stock - Vulcan Cannons, for example - while others can be used only for high-accuracy strikes on stationary ground targets.

TURNS ON A PENNY
There are only five button configs available for piloting the Havoc transformer, so you've got to learn to love at least one of them. While we would have liked there to be more allowance for tailoring things to your own style of play, there's one pad setup that should suit *Halo* players like a mink mitten. Right stick for looking, left for moving, while either one can be inverted in accordance with your own weirdo tastes.

>> The game may seem unfair at times, throwing you up against swarming ranks of opposition and insurmountable odds, but the difficulty level is pitched just right. Each time you retry a mission, you'll inch that much closer to completing it by finding shortcuts and utilising new strategies.

Eventually you'll be scorching enemy motherships into scrap metal and flattening entire installations with studied ease. Having to replay missions isn't a crushing chore, either, and that's thanks mostly to the satisfyingly mad combat.

Despite the environments being derivative natural settings (Desert, Farmland, Snow etc), they make the insane lightshows that break out during conflicts all the more dazzling. Dozens of laser bolts sear through the air as you barrel-roll through spectacular tangles of molten metal and hi-tech carnage, loosing off volleys of missiles that leave glowing trails and showers of explosive flak as they splash home. It's magnificent stuff and with a decent sound set-up it can come close to rivalling a certain cinematic Trench Scene.

Pay attention and you'll see the detail, too. Laser outposts, for example, will actually try to second-guess your movements, aiming their turrets at the spot where they think you'll be when their payload hits, much like the Covenant Wraith tank in *Halo*. Until you spot this, you're a pensioner on a rugby field.

Here's an example of the choices you get to make in a mission. Level 10 sees an allied cruise ship standing off against an enemy mothership, both dispensing ground and sky troops while holding their positions a mile apart in mid-air. When you join the fray, it's a Mexican stand-off where neither side has the upper hand, but enemy reinforcements are expected to gatecrash at any moment.

You've got to take that rogue mothership down ASAP - shred its shields, expose the core and crush the reactor at its heart - and do it fast to prevent the allied forces becoming nothing but a memory during a two minute silence.

Will you work with your comrades in the air, defending your attack copters to preserve their helpful firepower while occasionally unleashing a cheeky salvo of missiles at the mothership in a series of fly-bys? >>

SMACK MY BOT >>

Mission: Infiltration

FIND ENEMY, LOCK-ON enemy, kill enemy. The rocket scientists came up with all the rocket science, you've got an easier job – kill so many things that it just isn't funny any more....



» Perform a surgical strike on an enemy garrison, and raze the place to the ground.



» Take out the radar posts, and blast the scout plane as it tries to escape.



» Hit the base with everything... ideally from the air for maximum damage.



» Shoot the gatecrashing mothership down before it can fortify the base.



» Success! Cue early-80s style robo-dancing in celebration of destruction.



↑ Air-to-air combat provides some of *Gun Metal*'s most spectacular moments.



↑ Defend your convoy, offend everyone else.



↑ If only you had a mirror at your disposal.



↑ The assault cannon is the ultimate boys' toy.

» Or will you take the maverick, high-risk gambit of sticking to the ground, blasting away at the belly of the beast, using their own craft as cover from enemy mortar and napalm in the hope that you can avoid the intense cannon fire long enough to loose off some crippling blows?

We're not saying that *Gun Metal* allows you to mix several different styles of play. Action and intensity are the order of the day from the off, and that's the way the game plays until the final screen.

But it's up to you whether you plunge straight in with the BFGs, or mince about taking distant pot-shots. You can set the pace depending on which attack form you choose, although taking cover or employing stealth are minimal concerns when you're in a towering robot – massive firefights inevitably kick off within seconds of the fireworks and firepower being unleashed.

As we've said, it's a tough nut to crack. It can be alienating and frustrating to survive the early stage baptisms of fire. But keep digging at it, keep blazing away until the whole island's knee deep in smoking wreckage, and you'll eventually uncover some precious *Gun Metal*.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Levels are spartan, but the action is a smooth and glorious show of lasers and OTT lighting effects.

STYLE

Giant robots, enemy fleets, hulking mother ships... it's a glorious arena of battlemechs.

IMMERSION

Initially clunky and difficult, but a bit of patience given to mastering the controls will reap dividends.

LIFESPAN

Fourteen missions, including four large, demanding final campaigns. Not that long, but challenging.

GOOD POINTS

- FRANTIC BATTLES.
- HAVOC JET HANDLING FEELS SPOT ON.
- CHALLENGING RATHER THAN FRUSTRATING.
- BIG ROBOTS STOMPING STUFF.

BAD POINTS

- CONTROLS SHOULD BE CUSTOMISABLE

SUMMARY

An enjoyable serving of intense robo-death combat that's highly recommended if you can stomach the limited controls.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.3 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Previewed - Issue 03, page 022

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips



WHAT DVD WANTS YOU! FOR THE WAR ISSUE

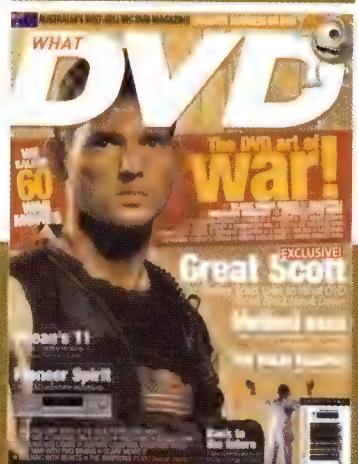
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↑ A rare moment of excitement as every player gets stuck into the action on all fronts.

Millennial makeover for monster-mash mazer

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY

WORDS: DANIEL STAINES

DEVELOPER:	MIDWAY
PUBLISHER:	MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE:	JUNE 14
PLAYERS:	4
WEBSITE:	WWW.MIDWAY.COM

AS AN ARCADE TITLE, *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy* is little more than mediocre. Its mindlessly repetitive button-bashing gameplay, tired aesthetics and tedious linearity make it an experience that can only be stomached sporadically, in one dollar doses at a time. Even then, one would have to be extremely hard up for entertainment to play it more than once or twice. It is, in every sense of the phrase, completely uninspired.

It's unfortunate that Midway has seen fit to port *Dark Legacy* directly to the Xbox without bothering to improve it in any significant way. It's unfortunate for us because *Dark Legacy* is utterly vile outside of the arcades; and unfortunate for Midway because no one in their right mind would pay 100 bucks for a game that they'll be done with in 10 minutes.

That is not an exaggeration - all the enjoyment that can be gleaned from this title can be found in the very first level. After that, the game becomes a vortex of boredom - a boretex, if you will - in which the player is sucked into a downward spiral of repetition and monotony. Grossly superficial isometric monster shooting gameplay may have cut the mustard in the early 80s when the original *Gauntlet* was released, but now it's a sign of cynical laziness in game design.

Indeed, there doesn't seem to be any other way to account for *Dark Legacy*'s flaws aside from indolence. The visuals, for example, would not look out of place on an N64. Blurry textures, drab player models and laughably second rate CGI cut scenes makes one wonder about the amount of effort - if any - that was put into crafting this Xbox port. Pulling up the rear is a collection of dire audio samples and music tracks, making *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy* one of those games you'd best avoid.



↑ Multiplayer can lead to cramped styles.



↑ Time to whip out that magic attack.



↑ Death... or just Orco from *He-Man*?



↑ The first boss face-off. Fire, slash, etc.



↑ Santa Claus sticks it to the Grinch.

BONUS INFO

MEET THE TEAM

The original featured just four characters. *Dark Legacy* adds 12 new and unlockables to the original Wizard, Elf, Warrior and Valkyrie.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Dark Legacy does not, in any way, look or sound like an Xbox game should. Very poor.

STYLE

Despite being heir to the legendary *Gauntlet* franchise, *Dark Legacy* is completely unappealing.

IMMERSION

Surprisingly unengaging. *Dark Legacy* isn't exactly the most involving game around.

LIFESPAN

It's addictive for ten minutes - and asinine after that. You won't be coming back to it after the first time.

GOOD POINTS

- UH... YOU CAN PLAY IT WITH THREE FRIENDS, BUT ONLY IF YOU DON'T LIKE THEM VERY MUCH.
- IT'S GOT GAUNTLET IN THE TITLE.

BAD POINTS

- ENORMOUSLY TEDIOUS GAMEPLAY.
- SECOND RATE VISUALS

SUMMARY

Dark Legacy is a bit of a stinker. Great for torturing captured spies and removing unwanted house guests, but little else.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

3.9 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: It's the first time *Gauntlet* has made it to the magazine.

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips.



↑ Those tasty wolverine claws in action. Just remember *never* to scratch your nose.



↑ Bundle! Scraps tend to be messy affairs.



↑ Xbox or PSone? Visuals make it hard to tell.

Shoot and slash scum in retro-themed future China

NEW LEGENDS

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

CRITIC'S CHOICE	
DEVELOPER:	INFINITE MACHINE
PUBLISHER:	THQ
RELEASE DATE:	MAY 2002
PLAYERS:	1
WEBSITE:	WWW.THQ.COM/NEWLEGENDS



↑ "That ain't a big gun. *This* is a big gun..."

THINK OF A WORLD a bit like that in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, but with loads of kick-ass guns. Now imagine laying waste to enemy hordes with a weapon of your choice in each hand, simultaneously stabbing one through the eye and blasting a shotgun load straight through his liver. Thanks to *New Legends*, anyone can live this life.

There's plenty in the game's favour, not least a teetering mound of weapons – everything from swords and shotguns to Wolverine claws and pointy club things. And since in-game hero Sun Soo is ambidextrous, he can finish off a foe with a simple left-handed gunshot after some protracted right-hand swordplay. Just like Indiana Jones in *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*.

The action's pretty basic – just cut a swathe through the bad guys in the name of freedom. This simplistic stuff is better suited to short bursts than long gaming sessions, but the different weapons and combat combos make you want to progress.

And within the narrow premise, there's a pleasing degree of variety in the gameplay. On some occasions you're joined by CPU buddies, on another you have to man a gun emplacement, while one notable level has you fleeing down a valley with an avalanche rumbling behind you.

So why doesn't it get a better score? Well, plenty of reasons. Technically it's unimpressive, looking like a PS One game in its worst moments. The frame rate is dodgier than an acceptance speech at the Academy Awards and the textures are plainer than a bowl of Cornflakes. And being big merely enhances the sparse nature of some levels. Hardly cutting edge stuff.

Worse than that, the game is littered with flaws. Characters stick on scenery while the camera occasionally struggles to find the action. And a particularly annoying incident occurs in the avalanche level. It starts with the amount of health left over from the previous level – start with good health and you can easily take the random damage sustained from jumping down the valley or being hit by small rocks. Start with bad health and you just die half way down, in a frustrating, unfair and entirely arbitrary way.

In order to complete it, you have to load an older saved game and repeat the previous level, which is just plain sloppy.

Niggles like this drain all the promise from *New Legends*. What could have been a fun update of the scrolling beat-'em-up turns out to be unremarkable, flawed and frequently annoying.

BONUS INFO

» CRISP SOUND...

...by which we mean the effects sound like someone was eating crisps in the studio while they were being recorded. It's the only rational explanation to why the FX are so bad.



↑ Thankfully, Blue Bloke's on your side.

THE VERDICT

POWER

So sparse, so lean, so quiet, you'll probably think your Xbox graphics chip has broken down.

STYLE

Wholly unremarkable visuals and sound that could have both come from a late-90s game.

IMMERSION

Unsophisticated gameplay, but the hack-'n'-slash does occasionally bloom into short fun bursts.

LIFESPAN

The lack of sustained excitement means you're more likely to tire of it than complete it.

GOOD POINTS

- LOTS OF BIG FIGHTS.
- SOME NICE, ACTION-PACKED CUT SCENES.

BAD POINTS

- QUICKLY GETS REPETITIVE
- TECHNICALLY, IT'S PAP
- SEEMS PRETTY BUGGY IN PLACES

SUMMARY

An intriguing mix of ancient and modern settings can't hide a flawed game that quickly becomes repetitive and boring.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

4.9 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Preview - Issue 02, page 024

» COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 05



↑ The giant screen shows close-up action to the crowd. Even the imaginary corner kick arrows.

Now you can bend it like the man himself

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

WORDS: ED LOMAS

GAME INFORMATION	
DEVELOPER:	RAGE
PUBLISHER:	RAGE
RELEASE DATE:	MAY 2002
PLAYERS:	1-4
WEBSITE:	WWW.DAVIDBECKHAMSOCER.NET



AVID BECKHAM isn't just a pretty face... he's also a part-time videogame designer. He programmed this game all by himself. On an Atari ST. In his loft, between matches.

No, of course he didn't. Thing is though, if he *had* actually made this game on his own, we might be a little more impressed with it. As it is, produced by an experienced team of full-time game developers, it's simply not good enough. Last issue, we had the biggest franchise in football videogaming arrive on Xbox in the form of *2002 FIFA World Cup* (Issue 03, 8.7) and this month *ISS2*. And although neither of them is the killer footy game we were hoping for, they're both considerably smarter than *Beckham*.

The first major downer is the way it looks. This is clearly a game made for sub-Xbox

consoles. The players and grounds are basic, the animation's weak, the ball movement is unrealistic. It's all just so... well, so-so. The first training stage doesn't help things either, since one of the first things in the game you'll see is what looks like a cardboard cutout of a child's crayon drawing of a car being dragged across the background. It's a laugh-out-loud terrible throwback to the era of 16-bit video gaming.

The free kick system is the one good thing about the game - it's easy to bend it like Beckham and score fun goals, but other than that doesn't do anything at all well. Being based on various earlier games by developer Rage (such as the *UEFA Striker* series), the action lacks any sparkle and is noticeably years old.

Scoring is way too hit-and-miss, with the keepers able to glance many perfectly good shots away for corners. In one match we played, we got seven consecutive corners - the ball was lobbed into the box and volleyed hard at goal, but the keeper knocked every attempt off. The eighth time we got bored and stopped shooting.

It's things like this that stop *David Beckham Soccer* feeling like a real game of football. Try as hard as you like, but it's impossible to have a game that generates the fun, flowing play of a real game of footy.

Combine this with graphics and presentation that seem at least three years out of date, and what you're left with is a pretty poor soccer title.



↑ Japan foul, on average, every 20 seconds.



↑ The rain effect is impressively crap.



↑ Almost recognisable players. Almost.

X THE VERDICT

POWER
Doesn't look anything like an Xbox game should. Every aspect is basic and out-dated.

STYLE
Poor players, fake names and a smelly theme song make this as stylish as Peter Beardsley.

IMMERSION
It's possible to play a reasonable game, but it never feels like a proper football match.

LIFESPAN
The simple gameplay and annoying training modes won't keep you at it for long.

GOOD POINTS	
↑	• FREE KICKS ARE FUN.

BAD POINTS	
↓	• LOOKS PLOP. • STUPID BALL MOVEMENT. • FAR TOO MANY CORNERS. • FEELS LIKE AN OLD PLAYSTATION GAME.

SUMMARY
Outdated football action that should be left alone, even (or maybe especially) by fans of Mr Posh Spice himself.

4.2 / 10

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

X
>> PREVIOUSLY: This is Beckham's first appearance in the magazine
>> COMING SOON: Hints & cheats





▲ Awkward controls, high speeds and all those trees... mind you don't go legs akimbo into a trunk.

A game in need of a Ventolin Inhaler 'boost'

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

CREDITS INFORMATION	
DEVELOPER:	KONAMI
PUBLISHER:	KONAMI
RELEASE DATE:	MARCH 22
PLAYERS:	1-2
WEBSITE:	WWW.XBOX.COM/ ESPNINTLWINTERSPORTS2002

YES, WE MADE *Track and Field* don't you know," Konami would possibly say at a party, basking in the knowledge that a version of their legendary button-bashing sports title has graced almost every format since it first appeared in the arcades 19 years ago. It's probably responsible for RSI among thirty-something males. Well, for most cases.

But if you then tried to put them on the spot by asking how they got from that sports classic to this tragic video game episode of Winter Olympicy, once your back was turned to pick up a pork pie, they'd almost certainly be escaping through the toilet window.

Snowy slopes are a great place to play - as Amped (Issue 01, 8.7) showed, it can make for some really satisfying gaming. *ESPN Winter Sports*' take on the slopes, however, is dreadful. Take the slalom skiing, for example. Control is plain rubbish, taking an event that hinges on gracefully looping together turns and making you

skid awkwardly down the courses, weaving jerkily through each flag checkpoint.

The Bobsleigh is equally terrible, as you bump around the icy tube with no finesse, skill or fun. It even features turbo chevrons, just (not) like in the real thing. Maybe this is what a turd feels like as it careers out of control round the U-bend towards the sewers.

Speed Skating is an average bit of button-bashing action, Curling is alright if basic (much like the real thing), and Moguls (freestyle skiing over a series of bumps) is just a passable rhythm-building exercise.

The most enjoyable events, Snowboarding and Figure Skating, are the ones where control is taken away from you, and you're reduced to a game of Simon Says. With Snowboarding, you input a sequence of button presses just before catching some air to pull off a trick, and Figure Skating is a fairly cool take on arcade dancing games, where you press the directional-pad in time with the on-screen prompts.

The enjoyment you get from these, though, has nothing at all to do with the respective sports, and goes to show just how hollow and empty a game this really is.

Two bearable events are not enough to justify recommending this game, and the fact that it's for such a powerful console makes the whole package all the more shocking. Devoid of any thought, balance and pleasure, *ESPN Winter Sports* is a triple-A title - atrocious, awful and awkward. What could have been a yummy lemon Slush Puppie turns out to be nothing but a horrifyingly acrid mouthful of slightly melted yellow snow.



▲ A return to old-skool button-bashing.



▲ Four men, one metal tube, no fun.



▲ Ker-azy style dance action... on ice!

BONUS INFO

» PISTE LIST

Downhill, Ski-jumping and Halfpipe Boarding complete the 10 event lineup. There's one track per event. Each is worth playing just once.



▲ Powerup zones? Why not rockets too?

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

Simple visuals and terrible controls don't push Xbox, just the patience of those who play it.

STYLE

Bland sports fare. Bad music, dull competitors, funky replays and spandex suits come as standard.

IMMERSION

None. It's as deep as your living room carpet, and as much fun as cleaning a toilet with your finger.

LIFESPAN

Plenty of Olympic medal-chasing at first, but the shallow events will swiftly quash your quest for gold.

GOOD POINTS

- FIGURE SKATING IS PRETTY GOOD FUN.

BAD POINTS

- SCRAPPY CONTROL METHODS.
- ZERO FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY.
- DOWNHILL SKIING IS MISERABLY BAD.
- AND SO IS BOBSLEIGH.

SUMMARY

A pathetic effort at a sports anthology title. It's a game stuck firmly in the Ice Age.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

3.2/10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is the game's first appearance in the mag

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips

DON'T PAY TO HAVE A LICENSE LIKE DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION IN YOUR PORTFOLIO, BECAUSE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT KONAMI USES TO SPRUCE UP ITS OTHERWISE DULL FIGURE-SKATING CONTEST. ODDLY ENOUGH, IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE AMUSING TO PLAY FOR A FEW MINUTES.



↑ Don't bother taking the perfect line. Bounce off number 6 and cackle your way into pole position.

Honda head honcho gets his hands (and the rest) dirty

MX2002 FEAT. RICKY CARMICHAEL

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER:	PACIFIC COAST POWER & LIGHT
PUBLISHER:	THQ
RELEASE DATE:	MAY 2002
PLAYERS:	1-2
WEBSITE:	WWW.THQ.COM/MX2002

TAKE YOUR SHOES off. Go on. Don't pull faces like that... just do it. Now stand up, walk around a bit, rock back and forth on your heels. Feel what it's like to be in solid, substantial contact with the ground.

It's this kind of sensation, of handling and connection with the ground, that makes all the great driving games so truly great.

Okay, so the dirt bikes in *MX2002* are nowhere near as bad as the joyless hover vehicles that feature in that ever-expanding genre of ho-hum racers, the ones that pretend to feature high-powered racing cars that actually float a few ghostly centimetres above the track.

No - the bikes tear through the muck and grit with a decent sensation of contact. But there's a distinct lack of feeling from the weight of the bike and its interaction with the suspension which makes the whole experience a lot emptier and floaty light than it should be.

Part of a good motocross game involves that sweet, spongy feeling of hitting the dirt bumps

with just the right amount of pre-load, sailing majestically through the air like a crazy robot-dolphin and nailing a perfectly angled landing with a soft thud and no loss of momentum.

Excitebike on the Nintendo 64, for example, does this extremely well and, while you can go through similar motions in *MX2002*, there isn't the same amount of satisfaction.

If you do bail out and crumble to the dirt in a mess of limb and chassis, the game will place you back on the track at full speed, just a second or two behind your previous position. Initially this seems like a cop-out that threatens to make things a pushover, but don't get your leathers in a twist - as you work your way into the pro season it's actually good for the flow of play.

Especially since the tracks are so stupidly long. Some races take several minutes for a single lap, and the arenas themselves give you little to look at. There's not much trackside detail, and the action seems to go on and on and on until you finish your first lap.

Realistic? Maybe, but games demand a sort of souped-up hyper-realism that's missing here. Without doubt, the course design should have been tighter, more funkified and more focused, instead of delivering the sprawling Tour de Muddy Field present in *MX2002*. The controls are intuitive within your first few races, which makes the absence of a good bike/ground relationship all the more unfortunate.

What you're left with is a half-decent motocross title that's unexciting to play (and in need of a decent trick system - see Bonus Info, above left). And on that bombshell, you may sit down again.



↑ Hands-free doesn't just mean phones.



↑ Put your foot down for the sharp 'uns.

BONUS INFO

SPRING-LOADED

Using the A button to accelerate seems daft at first, what with two analogue triggers available. But after a few tutorials, you learn what to do with them. One lets you 'pre-load' the bikes' suspension to gain extra air off jumps, while the other fans the clutch, an activity that gives a burst of boost just after landing or taking a corner.

STUNT SYSTEM

The trick method in *MX2002* is a bit of a mess, and involves using the right trigger in conjunction with a face button and a direction. It feels especially clumsy as you're using said trigger to pre-load yourself into a jump. It's a bit of a shame, since the freestyle arenas are filled with ramps and opportunities for tricks and flips.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Dirt has never looked so bland. It's amateur season on Xbox. Bike noise is, erm, noisy and bike-like.

STYLE

Decals and logos all over the place, but beyond the hoardings it's empty and lonely.

IMMERSION

Handling is responsive, but you never get caught up in the action because it's not exciting enough.

LIFESPAN

There's a two-player mode, and also an exhibition for some time attack fun.

GOOD POINTS

- DEEP CONTROL METHOD
- PLENTY OF COURSES - 16 IN ALL...

BAD POINTS

- BUT THEY TEND TO DRAG ON.
- SCRAPPY VISUALS.
- SHOULD BE MORE SATISFYING THAN IT IS.

SUMMARY

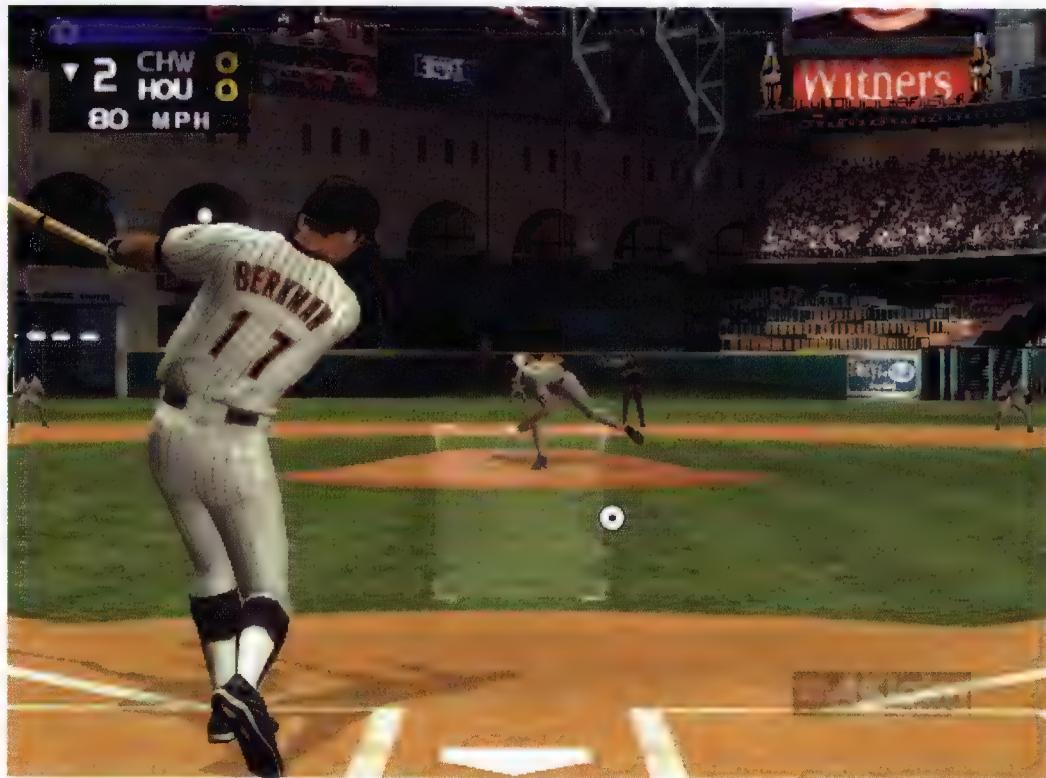
More false start than *Kick Start*. A limp yet slightly enjoyable dirt biker with some two-player mileage.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

5.0 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Preview - Issue 03, page 020

» COMING SOON: Game Movie - Game Disc 05



↑ "And the batter's struck out swinging. Yerrr outta thaaaar...!"

All hail the sport that spawned the caps

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003

WORDS: ED LOMAS

CRITIC'S CORNER	
DEVELOPER:	ACCLAIM SPORTS
PUBLISHER:	ACCLAIM
RELEASE DATE:	MAY 31ST
PLAYERS:	1-4
WEBSITE:	WWW.ACCLAIMSPORTS.COM/ASB2003

BASEBALL IS A sport that Australian people with normal lives and sleeping patterns hardly ever see - something that's "a bit like rounders" played by men in tight pants with amusing facial hair. For shift workers, new dads and insomniacs though, late night cable broadcasts have taught these demographics that it's actually a surprisingly entertaining game.

And in videogame form it's even better, cutting out the hours of frowning and spitting between the occasionally pitched balls and cutting straight to the main event. Here you get to control the two players who are having the most fun: the pitcher and the batter.

All-Star Baseball 2003's control system works well. When pitching, you choose the type of throw then point a little dot roughly where you want the ball to go. Pressing a button starts the wind up and makes the dot vanish, giving you a

second or two to move the (now invisible) aim point in a bid to fool the batter. A nice touch is that if you aim away from the plate (which is where you really need to be aiming), your pad rumbles to let you know.

When batting, you have a lozenge-like marker that you move around the screen with the left thumbstick, and can tilt in any direction with the right thumbstick. When the pitcher throws, you have to do your best to move the marker to the ball and thump the A button to smack it. Or not, as the case may be...

With two people playing this means a lot of fun. The pitcher has the advantage because they can invisibly aim the ball, and also because since the ball moves so damned quickly, hitting it is a real achievement. When the batter finally makes a solid contact, it's cause for much shouting and screaming and players run around the diamond trying to score runs while the other scrambles his fielders to retrieve the ball.

Batters have a secret advantage, through - if you're sitting next to the pitcher, you can often hear his pad rumbling as he tries to straighten out his invisible pitching dot. That's always good for a chuckle.

Games can go for a long time without any runs being scored - especially when you first start playing - but since matches are more a battle of wits than the all-out action of football games, the change of pace is actually quite pleasant. If that's what you're after, or if you have the slightest interest in real-life baseball, give this a shot.

BONUS INFO

DONKEY DERBY

You can master batting by entering a Home Run Derby, where the pitcher lobs like a girl so the batter can slam balls out the stadium.



↑ Each player has unique animations.



↑ Bubblegum cards reflect player skills.



↑ Check out the freaky digitised crowd!



↑ A home run. In replay. It's a miracle!

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

Not the most amazingly detailed graphics ever, but they're clear and smooth and do the job nicely.

STYLE

Great commentary, a funny digitised crowd, and lots of touches such as dancing mascots.

IMMERSION

Games can drag on a bit, but there's plenty of fun to be had with two people playing.

LIFESPAN

Loads of one-player options and statistics to play around with, great for an occasional multiplayer blast.

GOOD POINTS

- FUN PITCHING SYSTEM.
- GOOD COMMENTARY.
- NICE USE OF THE PAD RUMBLE.

BAD POINTS

- BATTING IS TRICKY.
- NOT EXACTLY FAST-PACED OR TENSE.

SUMMARY

A fine sim of a (literally) very hit-and-miss sport. Maximum fun can be squeezed out when played with a friend.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.0 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: No historical records pointed towards the arrival of this.
» COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 05



↑ "On me beak son, on me beak... Get yer flipper under it... waddle faster...!"

No penalties, no red cards - Vinnie "The Nut Crusher" Jones would be proud

RED CARD

WORDS: DANIEL STAINES

DEVELOPER: POINT OF VIEW
PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2002
PLAYERS: 1-4
WEBSITE: WWW.RED-CARD.NET

lightening streak slide tackles feature prominently, making the game feel more like a toned down version of the classic *Speedball* formula than a soccer sim. There are even *Matrix*-style slow motion cameras for those special shots you pull off.

It's this tongue-in-cheek approach that could make *Red Card* the same kind of simple, easy-going and quick-rewarding satisfaction of *NHL Hitz*, which took a likewise comical approach to the sport of ice hockey. With tight, common-sense controls and surprisingly decent audio and video, all it takes is a little competitive spirit to really get into *Red Card*. The game comes with a progressive set of bonuses that are unlocked in the Conquest mode - many of them hilarious - such as teams of hairy-backed apes, baboons, samurais, dolphins, and so on.

This, however, does not mean that the hardcore among you should discount *Red Card* as a game merely for kids and beginners. Indeed, one might reasonably argue that the true beauty of the title lies in the fact that it can be played in any way desired. By adjusting a few simple sidebar and rule options, it is entirely possible to turn *Red Card*'s over-the-top action into a serious soccer simulation. Obviously, it's not going to have the strict attention to detail featured in games like *FIFA* and the rest - the commentary does, in fact, prove to eventually be annoying enough to have to turn down, but it nonetheless proves to be a challenging and enjoyable engagement. If you're sick of the usual soccer fare, this is truly a fab little game worth considering.

WITHOUT QUESTION, there is nothing more enjoyable on this Earth than playing a game of hardcore soccer against a team of giant, violently belligerent penguins. This isn't a cutsey metaphor - we're talking real, giant, violent penguins that, notwithstanding their fat and flightless physique, play the meanest game of kick ball this side of the North Pole. These buggers can bicycle kick a ball into the back of the net from mid-field and that would be the best damn thing ever if it weren't quite so humiliating. Giant ball-playing penguins, as the kids might say, kick some serious ass.

But do they kick enough ass to justify playing Midway's *Red Card* for more than an hour? Well, happily, they don't have to. Super soccer penguins aside, *Red Card* is a highly enjoyable title that continues the hallowed Midway tradition of taking real world sports and exaggerating every aspect of them until they become fun and accessible to the non-sporting layman. Super charged rocket kicks and



↑ Few things are more humiliating than being beaten to the ball by a giant flightless bird.



↑ Although they add to the odd atmosphere, night games are a little too gloomy.



↑ "Oof! You have dishonoured me, you have dishonoured my distinguished blood line."

BONUS INFO

MAKE YOUR CHOICE

Since it's not your average footy game, *Red Card* has some far from normal custom options. You can, for example, play in rain or snow and at day, dusk or night, although the dark ones are *way* too dark. For moments of serious play, you can make the ref stricter than normal and for pure arcade fun, just dial the match time to six frantic minutes.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Visuals are quite tasty, with neat special effects thrown in to add punch to the experience.

STYLE

Class act all the way. Slow-mo replays, Matrix style camera pans on big kicks and giant penguins.

IMMERSION

Fairly engaging, but not overly so. Probably only good for one hour at a time stints.

LIFESPAN

A good selection of play options, bonuses and tournament modes will keep you kicking for a while.

GOOD POINTS

- STYLISH GAMEPLAY.
- OVER THE TOP.
- ADJUSTABLE FUN.
- PENGUINS!

BAD POINTS

- A FEW GRAPHICAL GLITCHES.
- A BIT OF A NOVELTY.
- NOT STRICTLY FOR THE HARDCORE.

SUMMARY

Enjoyable, exaggerated and over the top: *Red Card* is everything we've come to expect from a Midway sports game. Great stuff.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.5 / 10

» PREVIOUSLY: *Red Card* came out of nowhere

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips



↑ If only it played as good as it looks...



↑ Cut-scenes actually quite decent.



↑ They're all waiting on you...



↑ Scoring is very hard. You'll see this lots.



↑ Almost always a decent replay angle.

No, it's the other *ISS* game you're thinking about

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 2

WORDS: DAN TOOSE

FACTORY FRESH	
DEVELOPER:	MAJOR A
PUBLISHER:	KONAMI
RELEASE DATE:	MAY 2002
PLAYERS:	1-4
WEBSITE:	WWW.KONAMI.COM

SOMETHING THAT everyone should be aware of before racing out and buying a football game by Konami is that there are two development teams that make such games for the Japanese publishers. The *Pro Evolution* series that has received much critical acclaim as a serious sim comes from KCET (Konami Tokyo), while the *ISS* series from Major A has had varying success through the years with its more arcade-like style.

International Superstar Soccer 2 offers a couple of basic leagues and tournaments for over fifty International teams. In last issue's review of *2002 FIFA World Cup*, the only other quality football game presently available for Xbox (which scored a very respectable 8.7), we mentioned that we had gripes with the lack of options and modes. *ISS2* offers us little reason to quit whining on this point.

The first moments spent playing *ISS2* are quite disappointing in that it immediately fails to match *FIFA*'s level of presentation and style, at least in terms of visuals and sound. While the in-

game players themselves look quite like the real weekend warriors, the player animations and the stadiums don't quite rival *FIFA*'s.

On its own, *ISS2* is still polished enough to nevertheless earn a bare pass as football game. However, when it comes to immersing one's self in the *ISS2* experience, the game only manages to make things worse for itself, offering us questionable CPU AI and the broken dialogue that's supposedly meant to pass off for in-game commentary. Some of the worst examples include the audible pauses that occur when a commentator is trying to call up a player's name. The sample always takes just a few moments too long to load up, and the tone is almost woefully mismatched.

On the other hand, *ISS2* benefits greatly from the simplicity of its control scheme. There are some handy buttons set up for through balls, one-two ground passes, and one-two lobs. With these controls, it's easier for a newcomer to move the ball up field. The inclusion of a practice mode is also welcome - something EA are inexplicably lazy about including in the *FIFA* series.

Despite being half-decent on its own, *ISS2* fails to match the basic standards set by *FIFA* as a visual spectacle, and more importantly, as a simulation that accurately portrays the ebb and flow of a real football match (that's also presuming you play *FIFA* on the higher difficulties). Not even extra club matches could have saved *ISS2*. The best we can do is keep our fingers crossed for an Xbox version of *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*.

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

Despite being pretty enough, *ISS2* clearly isn't pushing the Xbox one bit.

STYLE

Superficially stylish facade masks the same old confusing selection and management screens

IMMERSION

Tight gameplay that demands attention sucks the player in once given a chance.

LIFESPAN

A tremendous challenge to beat on hard, but like *FIFA*, *ISS2* lacks enough modes.

GOOD POINTS

- EASY TO PICK UP.
- HARD TO MASTER.
- GREAT MULTIPLAYER.

BAD POINTS

- DISJOINTED COMMENTARY.
- LACK OF MODES.
- DODGY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.
- BLATANT CPU CHEATING.

SUMMARY

ISS2 is an okay football game for those willing to ignore its shortcomings. Otherwise a tad disappointing.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

5.8/10

>> PREVIOUSLY: Preview - Issue 01, page 023

>> COMING SOON: Game Movie - Game Disc 04

REVIEWS DIRECTORY

The verdict on every game reviewed in *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* so far



WHICH SHOULD I GET? >

NHL 2002 OR NHL HITZ 20-02

YOU WANT an ice hockey game... you *need* an ice hockey game. There are two on Xbox. Which one's better for you?

	NHL 2002	NHL HITZ 20-02
LOOKS	Detailed players and smooth movement with a flat crowd	7
SOUNDS	Excellent commentary and a moody heartbeat when you get a breakaway	8
REALISM	Real players and rules, plus a breakaway cam that puts you right in the action	9
EASE OF USE	Easy enough to get into, thanks to sensible controls and clear presentation	8
SIZE	Not massive, but plenty of options and depth to keep you playing	7
MULTIPLAYER	Very competitive matches with all the excitement of the real thing	8
PUNCH-UPS	Not very common, and disappointingly not that much fun either	5
STUPIDNESS	Quite sensible, really. Well, as sensible as an accurate ice hockey game can get	4
		6
		6
		4
		9
		6
		8
		8
		8



↑ EA hold to their "if it's in the game" promise.



↑ Midway put on their typical arcade spin.



THE XBOX GAMES >

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Soccer

"2002 FIFA World Cup makes it clear that the Xbox offers superior visuals to other systems."

SCORE: 8.7

ARCTIC THUNDER

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Racing

"A disgraceful excuse for an Xbox game. Looks dreadful, has no new ideas and feels limp and lifeless to play"

SCORE: 2.4

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Action/adventure

"Too easy, too samey and nothing new, though bat-lore heavy and faithful to the cartoon".

SCORE: 6.8

BLOOD OMEN 2

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Action/ adventure

"Linear gameplay dampens an otherwise vamped-up action experience"

SCORE: 8.5

BLOOD WAKE

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Racing/action

"Good old fashioned mindless fun, but please don't pay any attention to the story. Great in multiplayer mode."

SCORE: 7.4

CRASH

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Driving

"Instant, lo-fi fun for the few hours that it lasts. This is the kind of game that's designed for quick bang-for-buck entertainment."

SCORE: 6.6

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Platform

"One of the best cartoony worlds there is... but the old bandicoot hasn't learned any significantly new tricks"

SCORE: 7.1

DARK SUMMIT

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01

TYPE: Snowboarding

"Half-hearted gameplay fleshed out with a pointless storybook aspect. It's a combination of two genres that only proves their incompatibility with each other."

SCORE: 3.5

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02

GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01

TYPE: BMXing

"Can largely be considered the BMX equivalent of the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series. Tricks are slightly more complicated with the controls, though."

SCORE: 7.3

DEADLY SKIES

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Flight sim

"Simply not fast or exciting enough to fulfil that fighter pilot dream"

SCORE: 5.2

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS

REVIEWED: Issue 04

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Sports sim

"Pathetic effort at a sports anthology... a game stuck firmly in the Ice Age"

SCORE: 3.2

F1 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Racing

"Solid F1 title with everything a fan could want, but this is mere evolution, not revolution"

SCORE: 7.1

FUZION FRENZY

REVIEWED: Issue 01

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Multiplayer/party

"More party pooper than party popper... too simple and too repetitive"

SCORE: 4.5

GENMA ONIMUSHIA

REVIEWED: Issue 02

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Action/adventure

"A no-frills hack 'n' slash adventure... takes a while to crack... fun, but flawed"

SCORE: 7.0

GUN VALKYRIE

REVIEWED: Issue 03

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03

GAME MOVIE: n/a

TYPE: Shoot-'em-up

"No-frills gaming purist's dream, but not for the faint-hearted. Intense, skillful action all the way"

SCORE: 7.6

ISS 2

REVIEWED: Issue 04

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 04

TYPE: Football

"Bitterly disappointing sequel to a much-loved classic. ISS fans of old should treat this with extreme caution"

SCORE: 5.1



THE XBOX ELITE

THESE ARE THE Xbox Elite - the select bunch of games that have scored 8.5 or more in *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. You have our personal guarantee that each and every one of them is fantastic. These titles should be on your list as you look to expand your collection.



AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Snowboarding
"Addictive, impressive and deep... a perfect landing"
SCORE: 8.7



DEAD OR ALIVE 3

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"Accessible, slick and as satisfying as any beat-'em-up... a visual benchmark"
SCORE: 8.5



JET SET RADIO FUTURE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 02, 03
TYPE: Platform/skating
"An impossibly cool, distinct platformer... supremely playable"
SCORE: 9.0



RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 02
TYPE: Rallying
"Searingly fast rally game... best multiplayer racing game on Xbox... handsome as hell"
SCORE: 8.5



MAX PAYNE

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/shooter
"Flashy, stylish and repetitive but worthy of your time... bullet time is brilliant"
SCORE: 8.5



HALO

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 02
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Quite simply, a masterpiece and without question one of the best games ever made"
SCORE: 9.7



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Driving
"An epic racing game blending accuracy with entertainment"
SCORE: 8.9



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
DEMO MOVIE: Game Disc 03
TYPE: Skateboarding
"The biggest and best extreme sports title in the world"
SCORE: 8.5

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"All brawn and no brain in what is ultimately an excellently presented, but actually fairly scrappy scrapper"
SCORE: 6.3

MAD DASH RACING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing
"Just enough Mad, too much Dash and not enough Racing... frustrating"
SCORE: 6.5

NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 02
TYPE: Basketball
"A decent, playable basketball game - loads of strategy"
SCORE: 7.2

NBA LIVE 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Basketball
"Decent visuals and all new strategy makes this the best place to go if you're looking for a decent basketball simulation."
SCORE: 7.4

NHL 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Ice Hockey
"Excellent multiplayer game with joyful passing and shooting... slickly presented"
SCORE: 8.2

NHL HITZ 20-02

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Ice Hockey
"Provides great-looking, polished and ultimately simple entertainment"
SCORE: 7.4

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Platform
"Fun to play and great to look at... brimming with character"
SCORE: 8.1

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Slice-'em-up
"Yet again, the Star Wars licence is shamefully wasted on poorly detailed characters and generic locations"
SCORE: 3.3

TEST DRIVE: OVERDRIVE

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving
"Predictable and simplistic to play, but at the same time offering quick entertainment"
SCORE: 6.8

TRANSWORLD SURF

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Surfing
"A lot to plough through... some really great water effects... not enough variation"
SCORE: 7.1

UFC: TAPOUT

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"One of the best fighters. Like Jerry Springer but without all the intrusive morality"
SCORE: 7.4

WRECKLESS

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving
"Awesome demonstration of what Xbox can do... but not enough game in it to be truly essential"
SCORE: 7.5

GAMES TO AVOID

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

"One of those rare instances where none of the elements of the game's design come together in any meaningful way."

CEL DAMAGE

"Dreamy visuals, but it's simply far too hectic to play even in multiplayer to be considered enjoyable in any way."

NIGHTCASTER

"Tries desperately to be original with both its magic and control system, but falls miserably short of expectation."

SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

"A shamefully scabby game made even worse by how poorly it compares to the very game it's based on (*Crazy Taxi*)".

SHREK

"A painfully unrewarding platform game, and a travesty in game design. It's a crying shame that it comes nowhere close to the standards of the theatrical film."

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD: WIDE OPEN

"The lack of vehicle/ground interaction will soon have total dieselheads sucking a tailpipe"



TOP FIVE

XBOX VEHICLES



1. WARTHOG JEEP

FROM HALO
It's got a lovely engine noise, a great gun and perfect handling. If you disagree, you're wrong.



2. CAR BUILT FOR HOMER

FROM SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE
Designed by Homer in that episode with Danny DeVito as his brother. It honks La Cucaracha on the horn.



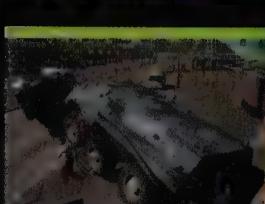
3. MUNCH'S WHEELCHAIR

FROM ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE
Get the flipper-footed Munch on wheels and he squik squiks like a badly oiled pram.



4. SKYLINE GT-R

FROM PROJECT GOTHAM RACING
Four-wheel drive loveliness from Nissan looking particularly funky as it jets through the streets.



5. POLICE AUV

FROM WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS
Great to watch replays of it piling through traffic and scenery - see this month's Game Disc.

**THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE SURGERY**

Grab those splints and plasters –
The Doctor is in the house...

**MUSIC FOR THE MASSES**

Are any music-making packages being produced for Xbox? I've really enjoyed ripping my music CDs and making soundtracks, but now I want to mix my own.

*Jason Hannen
by email*

Unfortunately, there are no music programmes in production at the moment. We're hoping that Jester, the makers of *Music 2000* on PlayStation, will be developing something along these lines, although nothing's official yet. Just imagine being able to rip your own music samples to the Xbox hard drive then mixing them together...

BROADBAND OR BUST

Will a 56K modem become available for Xbox? I keep reading about Broadband, but the likelihood it will be installed in my house is nearly non-existent. A 56k option would be a lifesaver for me.

*Matt Bucknole
by email*

Sorry, but it's unlikely that there'll ever be a 56K modem for Xbox. Although the demand seems to be there, none of the games are optimised to run at the lower speed. Why not try using System Link for the time being? It's actually a faster connection than broadband, but you'll probably have to settle for fewer than 16 players. We love it like a brother made from cable and two little connectors.

BUTTON BASHER

If I play games for more than an hour, my right hand hurts. This hasn't happened since long sessions of playing *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* on the C64 back in the 80s.

*Gino Moyaerts
by email*

According to scare stories, the newest games-related medical condition is known as Vibration White-Finger – a nerve-damaging condition first observed in coal miners using pneumatic drills at work. Since the Xbox rumble isn't that powerful, it's unlikely to have the same effect. And seriously, if it hurts, try loosening your grip on the pad and take frequent breaks.

Send your game-related problems to Surgery, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355, or email staff@oxm.com.au with the subject line 'Surgery'.

HINTS & CHEATS**HERE GOES...****GUN VALKYRIE**

Issue 02, 8.2
Game Disc 03, Playable Demo

UNLOCK CHALLENGE MODE

Once you've completed the game, Challenge Mode becomes available on the main menu. It allows you to revisit any level, with any of the characters.

UNLOCK LEVEL 3 GEARSKIN

Collect the Halley Core on every stage and you'll be awarded the Level 3 Gearskin for Kelly. Collect the final Halley Core on Yggdrasil, and after a brief cut-scene, you'll automatically be fitted out with this upgraded armour.

**DEADLY SKIES**

Issue 03, 5.2
Game Disc 04, Playable Demo

MORE MONEY

Shoot down any aerial target highlighted in orange on your HUD with guns rather than missiles. Since it's far tougher to do it this way, the bounty you get for destroying it doubles.

**ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002**

Issue 04, 3.2

BEAR COSTUME

Win all gold medals in the men's events in Championship Mode. Press the Left trigger or Right trigger at the character selection screen to access the costume.

PENGUIN COSTUME

Win all gold medals in the women's events in championship mode. Press the Left trigger or Right trigger at the character selection screen to access this Antarctic-themed costume.

ROBOT COSTUME

Win all gold medals in the men's and women's events in Trial Mode. Press Left trigger or Right trigger at the character selection screen to get the costume.

Note: Using any costumes will prevent you winning medals or setting records.

CRASH

Issue 03, 6.6
Game Disc 04, Playable Demo

LEAP-FROG BONUS

During play in the Bronco Bear Pit, you'll often see cars lurking by one of the two ramps at either end of the arena. Quickly drive up the ramp with the cars behind it and you'll score a healthy bonus for leaping over them. This works in all of the game modes.



↑ Leap-frog bonus nets 5000 points.

F1 2002

Issue 03, 7.1
Game Disc 04, Playable Demo

UNLOCK GRAND PRIX MODE

Achieve a rating of 60% with Bronze Medals in all five basic challenges in Challenge Mode. Grand Prix Mode will be available in the main options menu.

UFC TAPOUT

Issue 03, 9.0
Game Disc 04, Game Movie

GET FEMME FATALE

To get Femme Fatale, win eight matches in a row on the Arcade Mode.

UNLOCK BRUCE BUFFER

To unlock Bruce Buffer, beat UFC Mode with every fighter.

UNLOCK JOHN McCARTHY

Beat UFC Mode using Bruce Buffer to unlock John McCarthy.

UNLOCK MARIO YAMASAKI

Beat the UFC Mode using John McCarthy.

UNLOCK THE CAT

To unlock The Cat, win four matches in a row in arcade mode.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

Issue 03, 6.3

EASY WIN

When creating a boxer, give him the Body Blaster as his special move. During the match, throw a few jabs and back away. Wait for your opponent to move in and hit him with the Body Blaster which should stun him. Continue hitting away and you'll knock him out in no time. This can be done in all three weight divisions and works almost all of the time. Also, if you find yourself in trouble, try the Backhand (elbow) followed by the Body Blaster. It either takes off a good amount of energy or stuns the other guy, leaving him open for the Body Blaster.

SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE**CARDBOARD PASSENGERS**

In the options menu, hold down both triggers and press the X button four times. You will hear a sound (if it's a duck noise, you've made a mistake) to confirm it. All the passengers you pick up will be 2D cut-outs of Springfield's finest.

UNLOCK CHRISTMAS APU

Go to the options menu and while holding both triggers, press B, B, X, B. You should hear a beeping sound confirming you have entered it correctly. After performing the code, select any character. When the game plays, you will be Apu in a Christmas Car.

TREEHOUSE OF HORROR BART

In the options menu, hold both triggers and press B, B, X, A. You should hear a beeping sound confirming it has been entered correctly. After performing the code, choose any character and when the game begins you will be Bart in a Halloween costume.

HAPPY NEW YEAR KRUSTY

In the options menu, while holding both triggers, press B, B, X, Y. You should hear a beeping sound to confirm the code. After entering the code, select any character. When the game starts, you will be Krusty in a Happy New Year car.

PLAY AS SMITHERS

Go to the options screen, hold both triggers and press B, B, Y, Y. There should be a beeping sound to confirm the code. When you start the game you will play as Smithers in Mr. Burns' limo.



ARCTIC THUNDER

Issue 03, 2.4

ALL BOOSTS MODE

To turn every collectable power-up in the game to Boosts, at the mode select screen press Y, Black, Black, Y, Right trigger, Start..

ALL INVISIBLE

Turn every collectable power-up in the game to Invisibility. At the mode select screen press X, Y, X, Right trigger, Y, Y, Start.

UNLOCK SNOWMAN

Acquire Gold Medals on all twelve race tracks in Race Mode by completing each race in first place. You'll unlock a hidden character called Snowman.



↑ Skidoo boosts everywhere.

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD WIDE OPEN

UNLOCK DODGE T-REX

Finish in first place in season four of Career Mode. You must do this in the power division to unlock this hidden car. It can be used in all game modes.

UNLOCK HUMVEE

Finish in first place in all of the first three seasons of Career Mode. Do this in all of the divisions for a Humvee to use in all game modes.

UNLOCK MONSTER TRUCK

Complete all thirty six tracks in Single Race Mode to unlock a monster truck. This secret car can be used in all game modes.

BLOOD OMEN 2

Issue 02, 8.5

HOW TO BEAT CHAPTER 6 BOSS SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is the boss of The Industrial Quarter 'The Nexus Stone'. To defeat him, you must fight him through three different attack patterns. In the first attack, Sebastian's helper on the top level of the room activates vents that spew damaging steam. Block Sebastian's attacks and immediately use a Fury attack with the B button to

knock him into the steam. Repeat this process five times and Sebastian will then go on the offence with his second attack pattern. Run away from the central platform because a deadly energy stream will spring out of the middle. Sebastian will pounce off the walls and attack. As he's about to jump, run to the opposite side of the energy stream and Sebastian will jump into it. After three times the third attack pattern begins. Sebastian commands his helper to raise a platform - jump onto it and use your charm ability on Sebastian's helper. Once you have control of the helper, make him pull the levers in front of him until the floor below is flooded in steam. Now you can use your normal attacks to defeat Sebastian.

NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2002

Issue 03, 7.2

Game Disc 05, Game Movie

LITTLE PLAYERS

Go to the options screen and select the codes menu. Enter SMALLSHOES as a code. Repeat the code to disable it's effect.

UNLOCK XBOX BALL

To unlock the Xbox ball go to the codes screen in the options menu and enter the word BACHMAN.

STAR WARS OBI-WAN

Issue 03, 3.3

UNLOCK DARTH MAUL'S ARENA

To play with the Sith Lord In Vs Mode, defeat the man himself in the main game.

UNLOCK DEPA BILLABA

To unlock Depa Billaba in Vs Mode, beat the training droid in the Jedi Arena of the main game.

UNLOCK EETH KOTH

To unlock Eeth Koth in Vs Mode, beat him in the Jedi Arena in the main game.

UNLOCK MACE WINDU

To unlock Mace Windu in Vs Mode, defeat him in the Jedi Arena of the main game.

UNLOCK TUSKEN RAIDERS' ARENA

To unlock the Tusken Raiders' arena in Vs Mode, complete the two Tatooine levels (Missions 19 and 20) in the main game.



↑ Tooth-picks... to the death.

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

Issue 03, 7.1

SPECIAL ENDING

To see the special game ending you'll have to collect every Clear Gem in the game. You can get one clear Gem in each main level by smashing every single box and every crate that's visible throughout the whole stage.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

Issue 03, 8.7

Game Disc 05, Game Movie

TO UNLOCK AN ALL-EUROPE TEAM

Complete the World Cup Mode and finish off by winning the World Cup. You'll then have unlocked the All-Europe team in the Friendly Mode of the game. This team features some of the best European players - including Beckham, Owen, Raul, Zidane and Desailly.

ISS 2

Issue 04, 5.1

Game Disc 04, Game Movie

GAME PLAY TIPS

Don't mix up your tactics just because opposing teams use a different formation against you. Instead, stick to the default formation for your own side as your chosen team will inevitably play much better in their default setting. It also becomes very confusing if you keep adjusting your own style of play. It's common footy sense - play to your strengths. Choose a team best suited towards your individual style and stick with it long enough to master it.



↑ "Stick to dee-ee-fault..."

YOUR OPINION

F When the Japanese Xbox Controller S landed in the office, we threw it into a corner of the games room like a pair of week-worn pants. Then from outer-space, a spotty man brought it back to life by actually using it to play *Halo*. This issue's raging debate: Which is the king of controllers?

I prefer the original. Nice button action, good rumble! *Silat*

My hands are still recovering from opening the packaging for my second Official controller. I'll go for the Controller S in future to protect my hands. *Raptor*

My neighbour bought an unofficial Mad Catz Xbox controller. I've played a lot of *Halo* with it and even though it's good value, it's just a bit crap, and the rumble feature is weaker than the Official controller. *lindavitarme*

The rumble feature in the Official controller is too loud. I guess that I'll just have to put up with it. *harry b*

I turned on the rumble feature in *RalliSport Challenge*. I could hardly keep a grip on the controller. *Tom Scott*

I have used a lot of controllers over the years. Remember the Kempston compatible on the ZX Speccy? I think the Official controller is well built and I have had no problems - so far! *madeup17*

The unofficial Gamester pad has nice bits of rubber to help your hands grip but the buttons are a bit loose. *grahameshere*

I thought that the whole point of Controller S was to give players in the West an alternative. It's specially designed for pixies who, for some stupid reason, can't get their hands round the normal one. *theenoeffect*

Controller S is great and I've used it loads. It feels better than the standard controller and the button placement feels more natural. I'm buying two of them and will leave the standard controller untouched. *Xman*

I bought Controller S and it works fine with my Australian Xbox. To be honest I don't have any problems with the standard controller although I sometimes hit the black button or white button when I'm trying to hit the Y button. *JumpingJedi*

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC - What was the top Xbox game on display at this year's E3 event?

Send Your Opinion via email to staff@oxm.com.au with the subject line 'Your Opinion'. Alternatively, you can write them down and send them to Your Opinion, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355.



NEXT MONTH

In OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE
COMING AT YOU WITH MORE TREASURES FROM E3

HALO 2

'NUFF SAID

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UPGRADE
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FAKE NEVER LOOKED SO REAL.



Fantasy has a new reality in Dead or Alive 3, the next instalment in gaming's most popular "beat'em up" series. Experience multi-tiered fighting environments, a kinetic "tag-battle" feature and some female opponents that'll knock you for dead.

DEAD OR ALIVE 3



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